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MAGAZINE
SOUTH AFRICA

PHOTOGRAPHY, PAGEANTRY, MODELING AND COMPETITIONS

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*Pageant
Finalists*

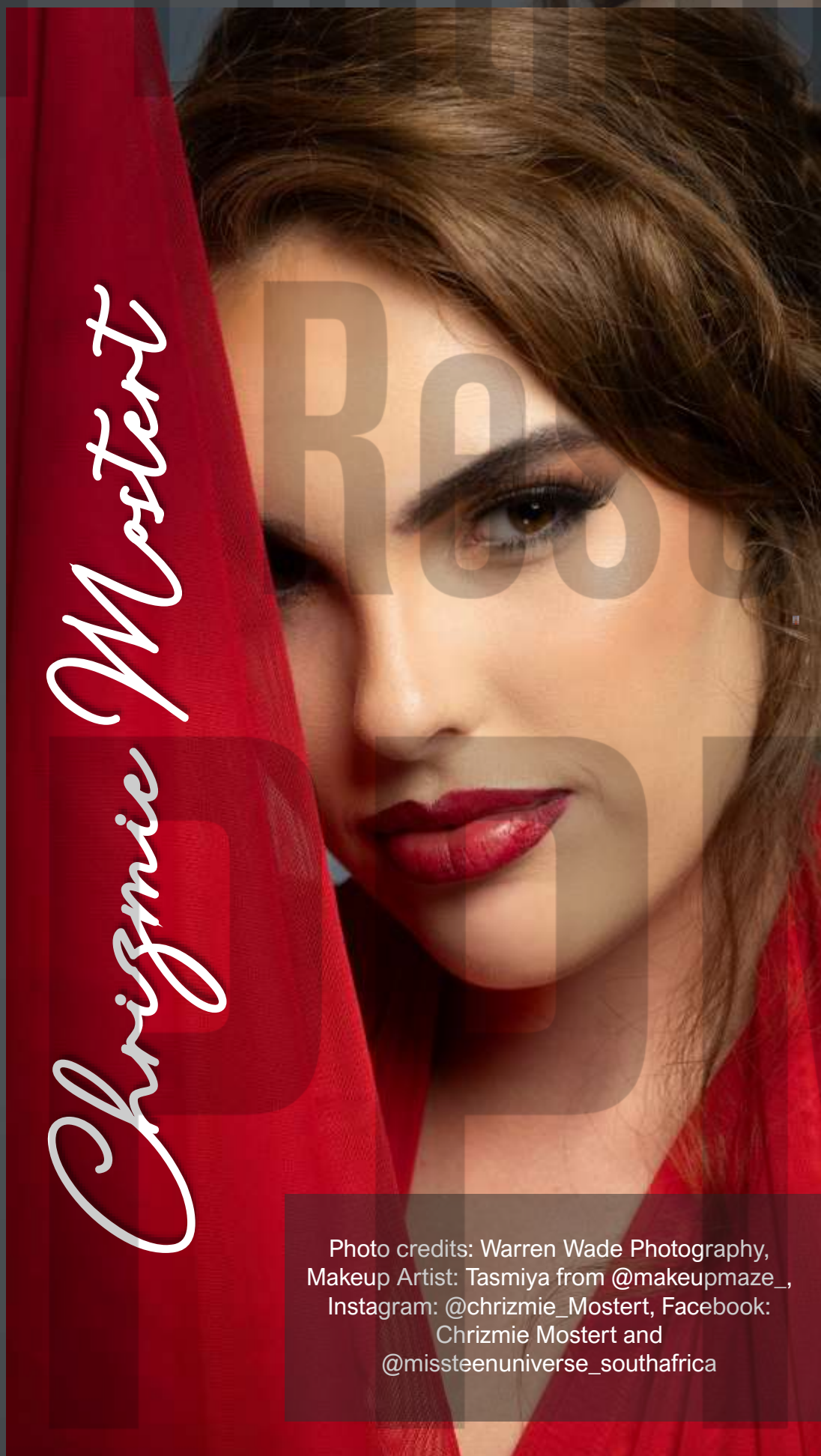
Melissa
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Issue 141
Featuring
National &
International
Models

Mrs. South Africa
2025 Semi-finalists

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ISSUE 141



Chrismie Mostert

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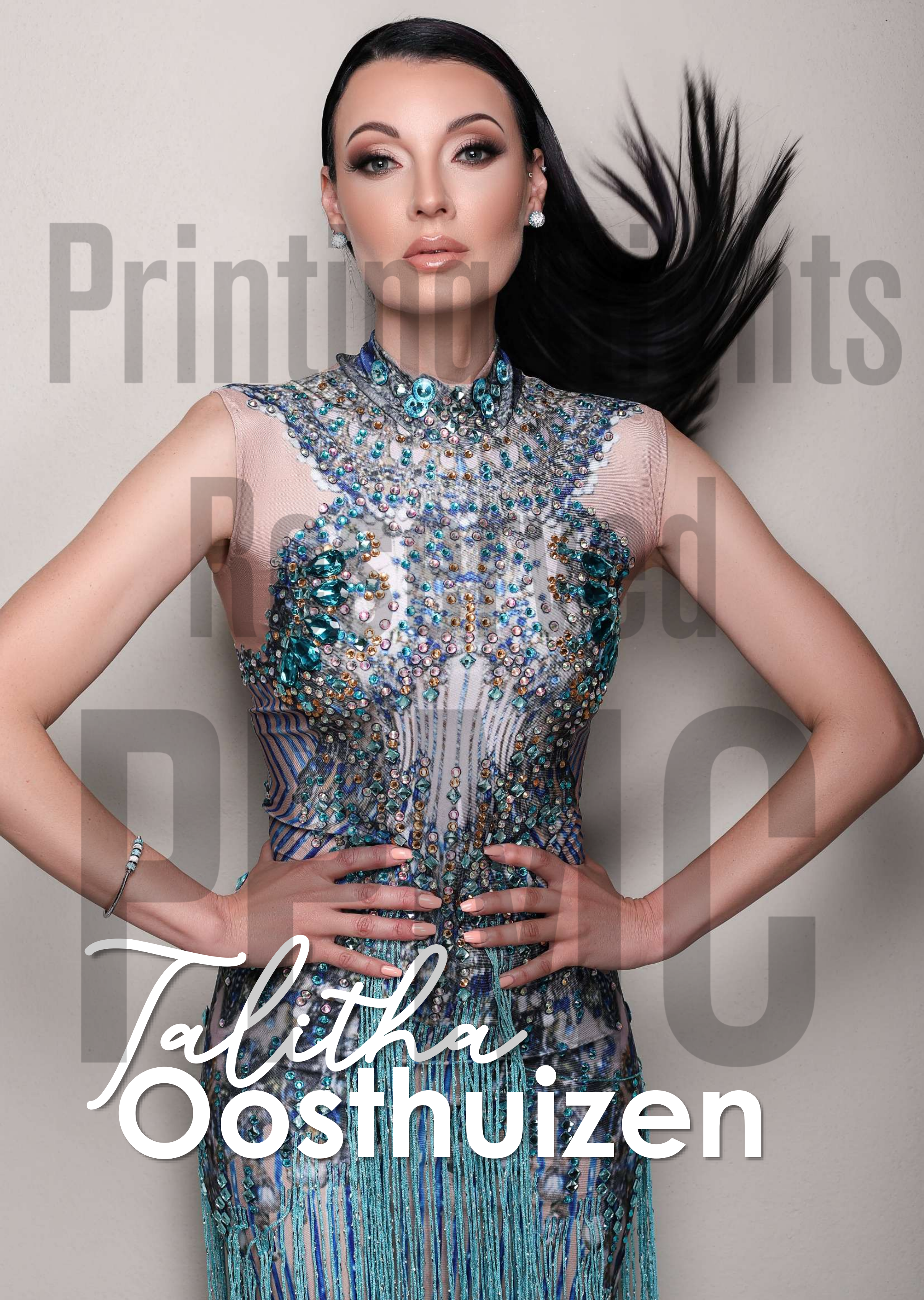
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Talitha
Oosthuizen

Interview with Talitha Oosthuizen

Mrs. South African 2025 Semi-Finalist



In February 2025, Talitha Oosthuizen, a dedicated entrepreneur, businesswoman, and philanthropist from Bedfordview, was officially announced as a Mrs. South Africa 2025 Semi-Finalist. This milestone comes after an impressive career that has seen her champion causes that impact both the local and international community. Talitha is not just competing for a crown—she is on a mission to empower others and make a lasting difference in the world.

“I’ve always felt a responsibility to stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves,” says Talitha. “Being a voice for the voiceless is a duty I take to heart, especially when it comes to the most vulnerable in our society, such as children and human trafficking victims.”

Her advocacy work is a key part of her journey. Talitha is an ambassador for Shattering Shackles, an organization that works tirelessly to combat human trafficking. With its life-changing efforts, Shattering Shackles seeks to raise awareness about the devastating reality of trafficking and exploitation.

“Human trafficking is a devastating reality that affects countless lives, and we must take collective action to end it,” Talitha states. “Shattering Shackles is making a tangible difference, and with greater awareness, we can expand our reach and impact.”

Her mission to empower goes beyond human trafficking. Talitha also serves as the patron of the Bush Whisper Foundation, where she helps equip individuals with vital skills for a sustainable future. The foundation’s programs focus on internships in various fields, from sewing and tourism to logistics and marketing. These opportunities help young people build confidence and gain hands-on experience for a brighter future.

“Empowerment begins with opportunity,” she says.

“When we provide people with the skills to succeed, we are not just changing lives—we are shaping a better future for all.”

In addition to her work with the Bush Whisper Foundation, Talitha supports organizations like Abraham Kriel Children’s Home and Little Gems Residential Care. Through these partnerships, she advocates for children in need of care, particularly those with disabilities or who have been abandoned.

“Every child deserves love, security, and the opportunity to dream,” she emphasizes. “Through these partnerships, we can create safe spaces where children are nurtured and given the chance to thrive.”

Talitha’s compassion for others extends to her personal journey. As a survivor of eating disorders, she has faced her own battles and emerged stronger, using her experiences to help others who are struggling.

“Overcoming personal struggles has shown me the power of hope,” she shares. “I want to encourage others to see that no matter what they’ve been through, they have the ability to rise, rebuild, and create meaningful change.”

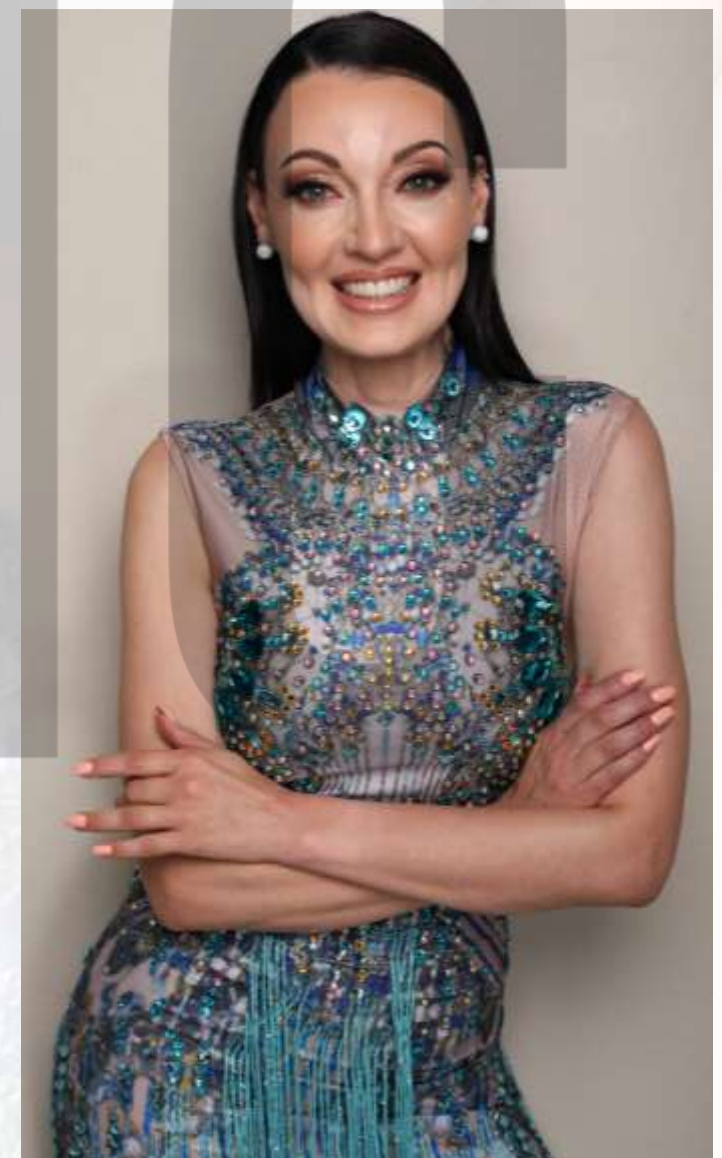
For Talitha, Mrs. South Africa is not just a competition. It is a platform to bring awareness to the causes she is passionate about. “The power of the sash is undeniable; it opens doors and creates opportunities to drive change,” she says. “But just imagine the

transformative impact of the crown. Winning this title would not be a personal victory, but a victory for the causes I stand for and the communities I serve.”

As she moves forward in the competition, Talitha’s dedication to community work and social change continues to inspire those around her. Through her involvement with Mrs. South Africa, she hopes to leave a lasting legacy of empowerment, advocacy, and transformation.

Joani Jacob, CEO of Mrs. South Africa, expressed her excitement for the new season. “This year, we wanted to go the extra mile for the wonderful ladies who support us each year, and bring the National Public Casting day as close to them as possible,” she says. “This is your year to step into your power—own your inner strength and let your voice be heard!”

As Talitha continues to participate in workshops, public speaking training, charity events, and more, she is eager to leverage the platform to continue advocating for the causes that are close to her heart. For Talitha Oosthuizen, Mrs. South Africa is a journey not just for herself, but for every individual she serves.





Karabo Mbedzi

PPMC MAGAZINE ISSUE 141

Karabo Official Designs

Website: karaboofficialdesigns-com.qshop.ng

Instagram: @karaboofficialdesigns

Pinterest: @karaboofficialdesigns

Facebook: @karaboofficialdesigns

Brand Model: @WisemanZither





In 2016, what started as a simple hobby turned into a full-fledged passion for Karabo, the self-taught designer behind @Karaboofficialdesigns. “I had just landed a permanent position at a logistics company and received my first-ever annual bonus,” Karabo recalls. “I walked into a Game store at Festival Mall, bought a sewing machine, and that’s where it all began.” With a background influenced by a mother who taught home economics, Karabo discovered a natural talent for fashion design.

@Karaboofficialdesigns is anything but ordinary. “My style is couture, chic, tasteful, and soft,” Karabo explains. What sets the brand apart is its dedication to the LGBTQI+ community, creating designs that allow individuals to express themselves beyond conventional menswear. “Most brands cater to the conventional heterosexual male who wants to blend in. Not @Karaboofficialdesigns,” Karabo says.

Teaching oneself fashion design came with challenges. “Pattern making, sketching, and learning the fashion design language were some of the hardest parts,” Karabo admits. But inspiration has always been close. “I daydream a lot, and I get ideas from different fabrics, their textures, and properties.

Sometimes, just seeing a new fabric in a store sparks an entire design.” International brands also play a role in inspiration. “I look up to Schiaparelli, Balmain, and Christian Siriano. Their artistry is extraordinary.”

Among Karabo’s proudest creations is the all-star three-piece set made for Wiseman Zitha. “That outfit introduced me to a whole new clientele I didn’t even know existed,” Karabo shares. Keeping up with trends is key, and Karabo stays ahead by following international fashion weeks. “Fashion week channels teach me new techniques in fabric manipulation, advanced sewing, and couture execution.” Fabrics play a significant role in Karabo’s work. “My

favorite is Charmaine, also known as ‘The Barbie Fabric.’ It’s colorful, stretchy, and suits all body types. Clients love it. Milano Satin is another go-to for my couture ladies’ gowns.” Despite not showcasing at fashion events yet, Karabo has received invitations and is working towards a 2025/2026 Spring/Summer resort collection for men. “That’s my biggest goal for the year,” Karabo states.

Aspiring designers without formal training are encouraged to follow their instincts. “Just start. Passion brought you this far, and research will take you further,” Karabo advises. “Experience is the best teacher. Trust your gut feeling—it’s what guides me in my creative process.”

@Karaboofficialdesigns is more than just a brand; it’s a vision for the future. “My ultimate goal is to run my fashion house internationally, impacting people’s lives through the way they dress and see themselves.” With the recent launch of a website, clients can now order bespoke pieces for special occasions, from matric dances to weddings and graduations.

Technology is shaping the fashion industry, and @Karaboofficialdesigns is embracing the change. “Clients no longer need to travel for consultations. We offer remote advisory services on how to take measurements at home,” Karabo explains.

The message behind Karabo’s designs is clear. “I want people to feel empowered, confident, and beautiful in my clothes. Fashion is self-expression, a way to tell your story. My hope is that my designs inspire people to celebrate their individuality and wear their hearts on their sleeves.”





Annikie

Lady of the Earth International
Tourism 2024 1st runner-up

Instagram: @annikie_rabohlale

Facebook: Annikie Rabohlale

Photo credit: Art Work



Annike Rabohlale has reached a remarkable milestone in her journey, securing the title of 1st runner-up at Lady of the Earth International Tourism. Reflecting on this achievement, she expresses deep gratitude. "It feels overwhelmingly amazing and successful to attain global and international accolades that I once dreamt of as a very young girl, without even knowing the possibility of it coming to life. I must say, God is indeed great and faithful."

Her motivation to enter the competition stemmed from her love for challenges and self-discovery. "My limitlessness and challenge inspire me daily. I needed something to challenge me to tap inside and unleash the magic I believe I withhold within myself," she says. "My big dreams always push me over the edge to take a leap! And it's amazing how God always affirms me in the areas where I dare to risk the most."

Competing in Manila, Philippines, was an eye-opening experience for Annike. "It was a lifetime experience! My very first time out of Africa. Being on that international stage with many other

beautiful women from different countries and continents broadened my perspective on life. I got to interact closely with people I believed could only be seen through a television screen or magazine." The competition formed a powerful sisterhood, leaving a lasting impact on her. "I hope I inspired them too, but my roomie from Indonesia did tell me that, and we still call each other to date."

Despite the excitement, she faced challenges, especially adapting to new food and a different time zone. "Even though I expected it, it was hard to adapt. I had to firm up and face every day with a smile and positive energy, and that helped me survive," she says with a chuckle.

Through her title, she hopes to inspire courage. "I believe everyone knows what sparks their souls. When you know what that is, why not be courageous enough to pursue it? Starve distraction and vote for your heroic side because that comes with an opportunity to live your life rather than just exist through it."

Growing up in Limpopo and later moving to Pretoria played a crucial role in shaping her journey. "Limpopo has equipped me with a great and concrete foundation to life. At the time I lived there, I was still 13 years old and younger. I had no idea how huge the world was. Moving to Pretoria inspired me to explore opportunities in pageantry. The journey started there, and even though it hasn't been a smooth sail, I'm grateful to God for it all."

One of her favorite moments was stepping onto a different continent for the first time. "Flying 26 hours and stepping into a different continent was a highlight. Then meeting the ladies and experiencing the competition week was all amazing. But the defining moment was the crowning! Pulling up such a stellar performance and bringing home four awards and a crown is no child's play, and I am very proud of myself."

She believes authenticity and passion make a great beauty queen and ambassador for tourism. "The passion I have for it makes it impactfully worthwhile as I serve my society." She

has already initiated community projects, working with schools to educate children on environmental awareness. "They hold the future of not only this country but the world. Knowledge will channel them in the right direction to tackle these issues and save our planet."

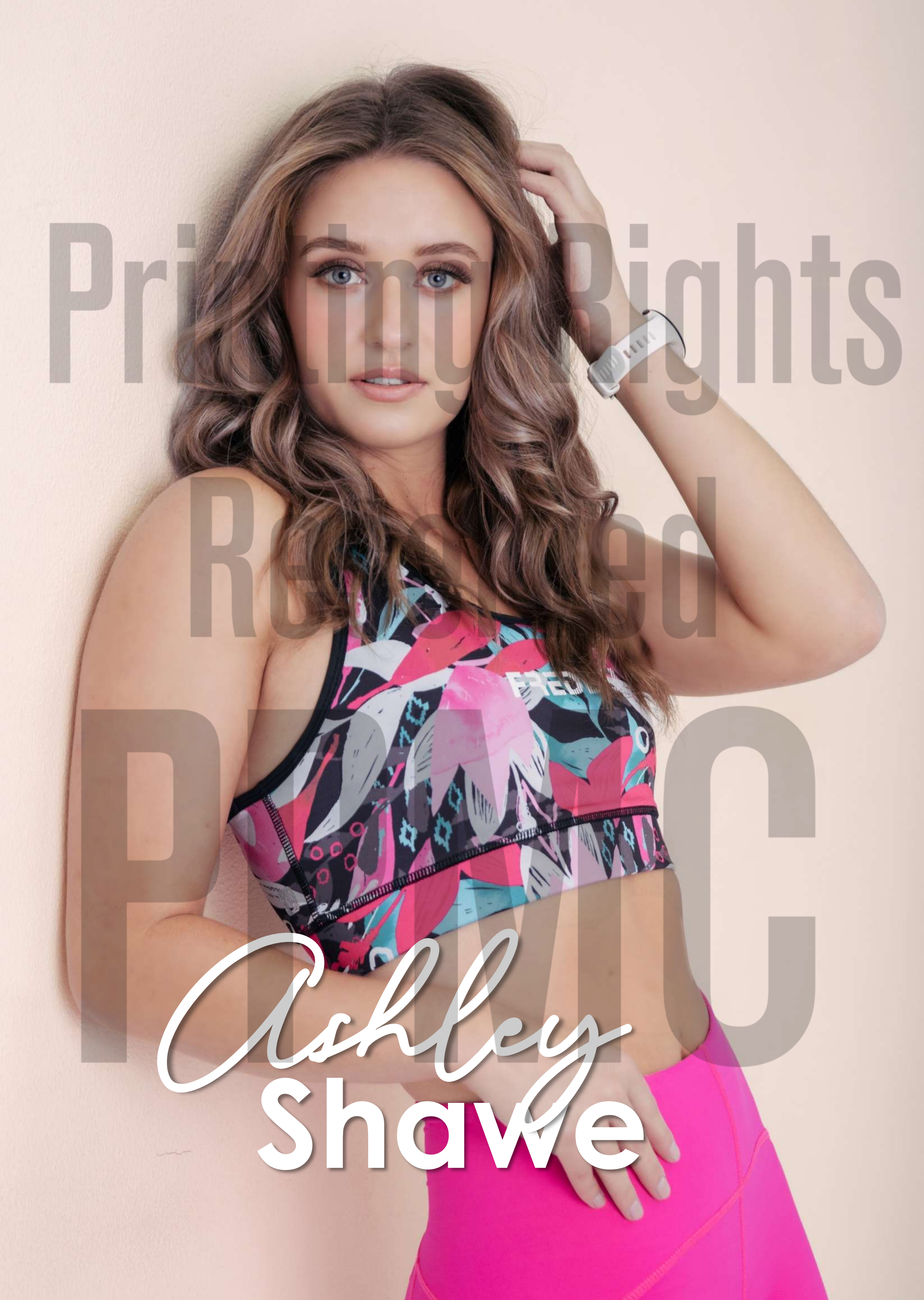
Her biggest inspiration and support system come from her loved ones. "My family, partner (hubby-to-be), and friends always go out of their way to support me in varied ways, and I'm grateful for them."

For young women aspiring to compete in international pageants, she offers advice: "Please make sure it is something you think is for you. It's not all glitz and glamour. It will challenge you big time, but it will be worth it if all aspects are properly aligned with the mandate."

Balancing pageantry with personal and professional life has its challenges, but she embraces it. "I love pageantry so much that it doesn't feel like an activity sometimes, but rather a part of who I am. However, it can get really hectic, so I try to balance against all odds."

Looking ahead, Annike has big plans. "Definitely an honors graduation in a few months and other things as well." When asked to describe her journey in one word, she confidently responds, "Groundbreaking! It keeps breaking barriers and defying the odds completely. It inspires many while it keeps shocking many as well."





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Interview with Ashley Shawe

From Sprinting to Strength



Ashley Shawe's journey in athletics started when she was very young. "I started running from a very young age," she recalls. "When I started competing, I did very good and I think that's where my passion started. Crossing that finish line first and hearing the pavilion scream at the top of their lungs gave me such a drive to give everything I had." That drive pushed her to train harder, and every second on the track felt worth it for that one moment of greatness.

Training at such a high level wasn't always easy, especially during early morning and late-night sessions. "I am very grateful for the support that I had in my training. My dad and coach helped me a lot with staying motivated. In the times where I struggled, I always tried my best to get my mind into that moment of winning, and that was a great motivator for me."

However, her career took an unexpected turn in 2019 when she suffered an injury. "I will say my injury didn't affect me personally that much, as I knew every sport had their injuries and it happens!" With her family, friends, and coach by her side, she went through rehabilitation and recovered. "Professionally, it was quite a setback because my mind was ready to give everything, but my body struggled to keep up. It was frustrating, but I took my training and recovery at a good pace to get me to where I was."

For Ashley, the comeback was always the goal. "This mindset was very important in my recovery because it helped me to stay motivated. I didn't want the setbacks to get me down. That's why I worked so hard to make my comeback great."

She faced even more obstacles in her fitness journey. "In Grade 11, I was on my way to Canada for athletics—they wanted me to come run for them—but then COVID hit, so I couldn't go." She also tried CrossFit and performed exceptionally well, placing 10th in South Africa in her age category at the CrossFit Games. Unfortunately, another injury followed. "I hurt my L2 and L3 disks doing a 70kg deadlift for the CrossFit Games. I was out for more than a year, in and out of doctors' offices. I just kept on going back to my comeback

mindset to get through these obstacles. I realised that there will always be obstacles in life, but I wanted to overcome them as best as I could."

During lockdown, Ashley wanted to keep moving and inspire others to do the same. "Fitness is my passion, and I just wanted to do something in lockdown—keep doing fitness and help others stay active in their homes." She also enjoys being active on social media and used the opportunity to post workout videos and create challenges.

As a personal trainer for Evolve 20 EMS Training, she finds joy in helping others achieve their fitness goals. "I love being a personal trainer. It makes me very happy to share my passion with others and help them achieve their goals. I enjoy working out specific programs for clients based on who they are and what their goals are. Hearing their feedback and seeing their progress is very rewarding."

One of the most memorable moments in her career was seeing her clients succeed. "Two clients came to me and told me how well they had been doing in their weight loss journey. They always struggled to lose weight, and now they had lost a lot within a short time—something they didn't think they could achieve. It made me feel very proud to see their hard work paying off and that I could be a part of it."

Ashley also has ambitions beyond fitness. "I've always liked modelling, but it's quite a difficult industry to get into. I decided that I wanted to take on the challenge and dedicate more time to modelling now." With the help of Wanita's Photography, she built her portfolio and took a step toward her goal. "I see myself doing fitness and modelling one day, hopefully being a fitness model and saying that I really love what I am doing."

Balancing both personal training and modelling takes discipline. "Being a personal trainer allows me to be flexible with my time. Training my clients is my first priority, and I do modelling when I get the opportunity."

Looking ahead, Ashley has a clear vision for her future. "My ultimate goal is to open a gym—something that is my own—and help as many people as I can to achieve their fitness goals. I will always enjoy modelling and would love to model as much as I can. Right now, I am working hard as a personal trainer to get experience in the industry that will help me in my gym one day. I also apply for as many modelling opportunities as I can to try and build my portfolio."

Ashley Shawe's story is one of dedication, focus, and determination. Whether on the track, in the gym, or in front of the camera, she continues to push forward, inspiring others to do the same.





Diketsa Mathelemusa

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From Overcoming Self-Doubt to Embracing Confidence and Empowering
Women Through the Mrs. South Africa Platform

Meet Diketso Mathelemusa

Mrs. South Africa 2025 Semi-finalist



Diketso Mathelemusa is a woman on a mission. At 32 years old, she is a mother of three, a wife, and a passionate advocate for women's empowerment. Born and raised in the small village of Hweleshaneng, Ga Mphahlele, she now calls Pretoria home. As a Program Associate at PATH, she dedicates her career to meaningful global health initiatives. Now, as a Mrs. South Africa Semi-Finalist, she hopes to use her platform to inspire women to embrace self-love and confidence.

"Growing up in a village, I often felt like I didn't belong. I was ridiculed for my dark complexion, and for years, I struggled with self-confidence," she shares. "I believed the negative words spoken over me and allowed them to shape my self-perception. But as I grew older, I realized that my uniqueness was my strength."

For Diketso, Mrs. South Africa is not just a beauty pageant. It is a space where women can be celebrated for their authenticity, their journeys, and their ability to overcome challenges. "Being a Semi-Finalist is a special moment for me. It means I get to share my story and encourage others to believe in their worth," she says. She hopes to reach young girls from small villages who may feel unseen or unworthy and help them recognize their beauty and potential.

Although she has only recently started her journey with Mrs. South Africa, the experience has already had a profound

impact on her. "It has challenged me to step out of my comfort zone. I've always been a shy person, but this competition has pushed me to embrace the spotlight, speak up, and share my story," she says. "Each day, I'm learning to be more confident in myself and my voice. True growth happens when you take risks and step into the unknown."

Outside of her professional and pageant journey, Diketso finds joy in simple hobbies that contribute to her personal growth. She loves reading books on self-discovery and taking walks to clear her mind. "Books help me see things from new perspectives, and walking allows me to reflect and find clarity," she explains. A fun fact that many might not know about her is that she enjoys dancing. "I may not be the best dancer, but I love music and moving to the rhythm. It's my way of having fun and letting go of stress."

Balancing work, family, and personal interests is no easy task, but Diketso makes it work through careful planning and the support of her loved ones. "Having my family's support keeps me grounded. My husband and children motivate me every day. They are my biggest cheerleaders."

While she is not currently involved with a specific charity, Diketso is passionate about causes related to empowering women, mental health, and education. "In the future, I'd love to contribute in a meaningful way," she says. If crowned Mrs. South Africa, she hopes to use her title to uplift young girls and advocate for education in underprivileged areas. "Education is a powerful tool for change. I want to work with organizations to provide resources and opportunities for learning."

Through her platform, she wants to spread a message of self-love and confidence. "I want women, especially young girls, to know that they are enough just as they are. Their dreams are valid, no matter where they come from."

In the next five years, she sees herself continuing to grow in confidence, taking on leadership roles in her career, and giving back to her community. Right now,

her biggest focus is making the most of her Mrs. South Africa journey. "This experience is shaping me into a better, more confident version of myself. I'm excited to see how I grow through this journey and how I can inspire others along the way."

Challenges have been part of the journey, but Diketso takes them as learning experiences. "Stepping out of my comfort zone has been difficult, but I've learned to push past self-doubt and embrace the discomfort. Balancing my responsibilities has also been a challenge, but careful planning and leaning on my support system have helped me manage it all."

For Diketso, beauty is not just about appearances; it is about self-acceptance. "Beauty is about knowing your worth and embracing who you are. Empowerment means having the courage to go after your dreams and support others in theirs."

Her advice to women who aspire to join Mrs. South Africa is simple: "Believe in yourself and go for it. It's not just a pageant; it's a journey of self-discovery and empowerment. Step out of your comfort zone, embrace challenges, and remember that you are enough just as you are."

Diketso Mathelemusa's journey is one of transformation and purpose. Through her participation in Mrs. South Africa, she is not only stepping into a new chapter of her life but also opening doors for other women to embrace their strength and potential.



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Reviewed

Hardus
Erasmus



Hardus Erasmus, a 22-year-old finalist in the Mr. and Miss Pretoria Gay Pride 2024, has always been determined to make a positive impact in his community. As a proud member of the LGBTQI+ community, Hardus knows firsthand the importance of a supportive network and resources for mental wellness. "Growing up, I've always been passionate about making a positive impact," Hardus shares. "As a member of the LGBTQI+ community, I wanted to use my platform to promote mental health awareness, challenge stigmas, and provide support to those who need it."

For Hardus, entering the Mr. and Miss Pretoria Gay Pride pageant was a chance to amplify his voice and promote mental wellness to a broader audience. "I saw the pageant as the perfect platform to break down stigmas surrounding mental health and encourage open conversations," he explains. This journey not only allows him to advocate for mental health but also gives him the opportunity to represent his community.

One title that holds special significance to Hardus is "King of Hearts 2024." "It's an immense privilege," he says. "The title symbolizes the trust and recognition my community has given me to spread love, kindness, and compassion. It's been an incredible journey, and I've had the chance to make a positive impact, especially through charity work and reaching out to those in need." Holding this title has shaped Hardus's path, inspiring him to focus on community service and continue advocating for important causes, particularly mental health awareness and marginalized communities.

The decision to join the pageant was not one Hardus made lightly. "It was a deliberate decision to challenge myself and grow as an individual," he admits. "I wanted to push beyond my limits and confront my fears." In addition, the pageant offered a unique opportunity for Hardus to promote body positivity and self-acceptance. "I've struggled with body image issues in the past," he confesses. "This platform allows me to showcase my confidence and inspire others to embrace their uniqueness."

Throughout his pageant journey, the connections Hardus has made and the impact he has had on others have stood out the most. "The friendships I've formed have become like family," he says with a smile. "But what truly warms my heart is seeing the smiles on people's faces when we've done charity work together. One memorable moment was when we visited a local children's home. Seeing their excitement when we arrived with gifts and spent time with them was unforgettable. It reminded me of the power of kindness and compassion."

Preparing for the competition requires Hardus to focus on both his mental and physical well-being. "For me, it's about balance," he explains. "Physically, I maintain a healthy lifestyle through regular exercise and balanced eating. Mentally, I practice mindfulness and positive affirmations to stay centered and calm under pressure. Self-love is key in my preparation, and I make sure to prioritize my happiness and well-being."

Beyond the pageant world, Hardus has a deep passion for the performing arts, particularly dance. "Dance has been a lifelong love of mine, and I enjoy expressing myself through movement," he says. "Ballet, in particular, speaks to me on a profound level." He also enjoys choreographing his own dance pieces, using music and movement to tell stories. When he's not dancing, Hardus loves attending live performances and connecting with nature through hiking. "Being outdoors helps me clear my mind and recharge," he shares.

Hardus is especially passionate about advocating for causes that are close to his heart, including LGBTQ+ rights, mental health, and body positivity. "Through my platform, I aim to promote love, acceptance, and understanding," he explains. "I want to fight against discrimination and raise awareness about mental health, especially for LGBTQ+ individuals." Hardus is committed to using his voice to inspire change and promote a culture of acceptance.

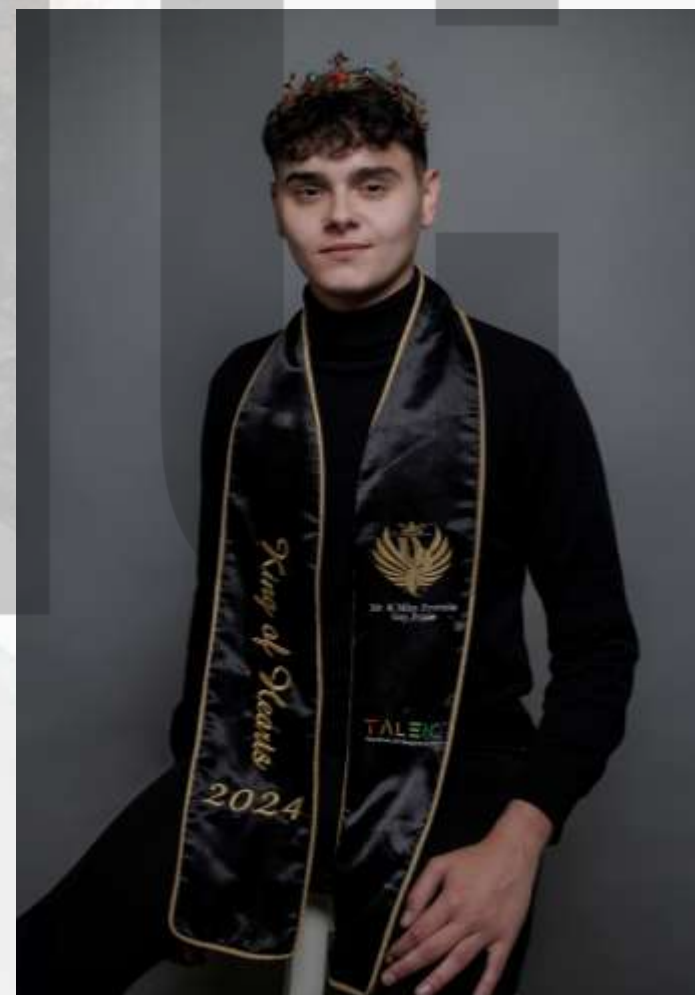
"To those who look up to me as a role model, I want to say this: Be yourself,

unapologetically and authentically," Hardus advises. "Embrace your uniqueness. Your identity is your strength, not a limitation. Never let anyone dull your sparkle or dictate your worth."

Participating in the Mr. and Miss Pretoria Gay Pride pageant has had a transformative effect on Hardus, helping him grow both personally and professionally. "This experience has boosted my confidence and honed my communication skills," he says. "I've learned to express myself authentically and passionately. It's also deepened my understanding of social responsibility and the importance of resilience and self-care."

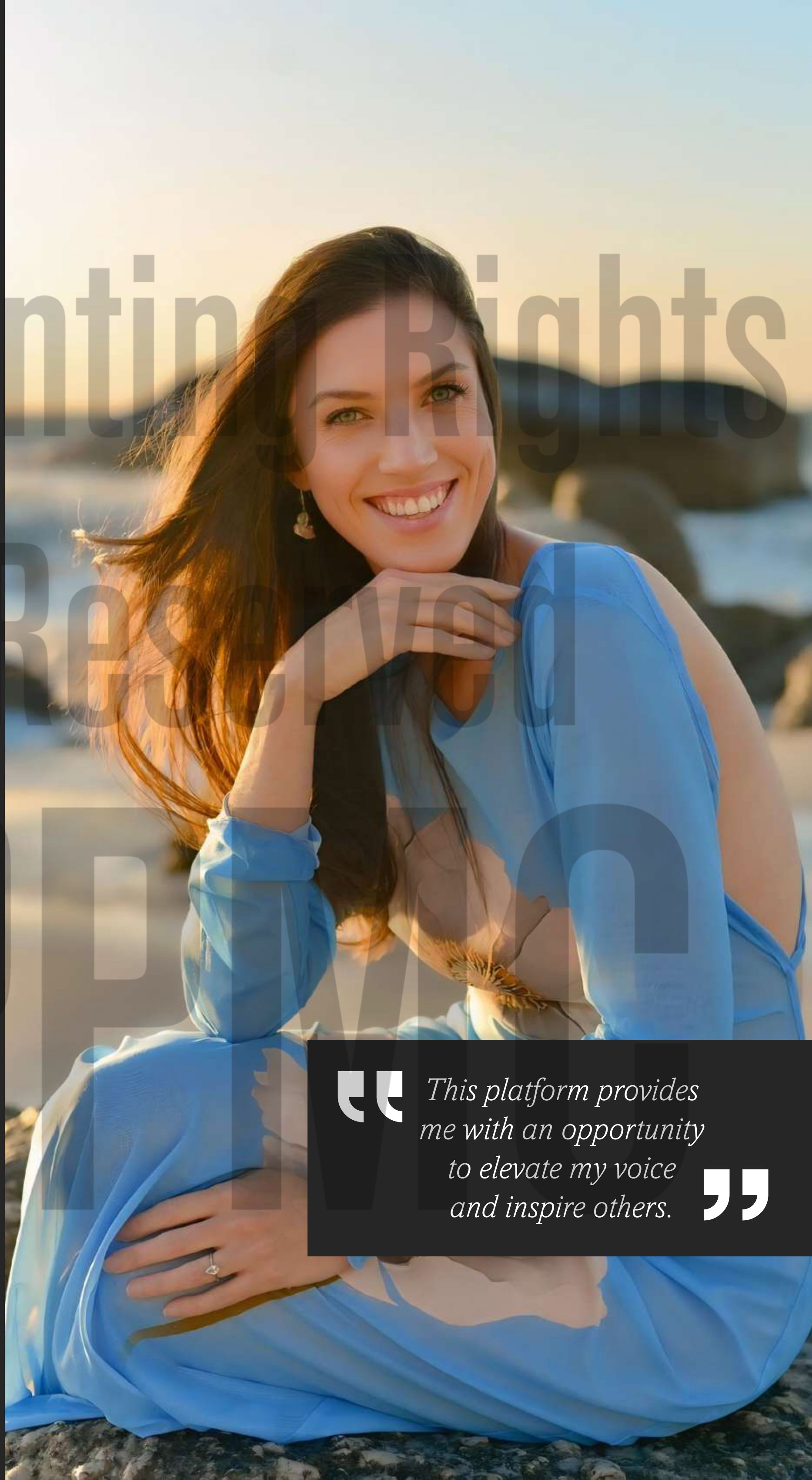
Looking ahead, Hardus aspires to continue using his platform to advocate for LGBTQ+ visibility, mental health awareness, and self-acceptance. "I want to help create a more inclusive and supportive community," he says. "In the future, I see myself pursuing a career in the arts, particularly in dance or choreography, and using my creativity to promote empathy and social change."

Hardus is excited for what the future holds, both within the pageant world and beyond. "I aim to live a life that inspires others and fosters positive change," he says with determination. "Ultimately, I want to leave a lasting legacy of love, acceptance, and inclusivity."



Mrs South Africa 2025 Semi-finalist

Wilmarie Kriel



“

*This platform provides
me with an opportunity
to elevate my voice
and inspire others.*

”

Interview with Wilmarie Kriel

Mrs. South Africa 2025 Semi-finalist



Wilmarie Kriel is a 36-year-old woman from Cape Town whose journey is defined by passion, determination, and an unwavering commitment to personal growth. With a career spanning tourism, aviation, and the dental field, she has lived a life rich in experience. Now, she embarks on a new chapter as a Mrs. South Africa Semi-Finalist, a journey that she describes as deeply meaningful.

"My inspiration to enter Mrs. South Africa stems from my desire to amplify my voice and skills whilst embracing my journey of personal transformation," she says. "I would also like to thank Nicolette Brits, who saw the potential in me and motivated me to enter, proving how powerful women upliftment and encouragement can be. Courage is contagious!"

Wilmarie's career journey has been diverse. She spent years working in the tourism industry, including a role at Kleine Zalze Hotel in Stellenbosch. She then fulfilled a lifelong dream by working as a flight attendant for Emirates Airlines for nearly a decade. "I soared the skies for nine years, and it was a dream come true," she reflects.

"Working in Business Class was especially rewarding, as I met incredible people from all walks of life." Eventually, she returned to Cape Town, where she

transitioned into the dental field and now works at Cosmetic Dental in Gardens as an Administrative Manager, Receptionist, and Social Media Account Manager.

"Being named a Mrs. South Africa Semi-Finalist is profoundly meaningful to me. It symbolizes not just recognition, but a pivotal step on my journey of self-discovery and empowerment," she explains. "This platform provides me with an opportunity to elevate my voice and inspire others—especially women—to pursue their passions fearlessly."

Throughout the competition, she has learned valuable skills, including public speaking, personal branding, and social media engagement. "The workshops and webinars have equipped me with invaluable skills that I cherish," she says. "I've learned to take challenges head-on and recognize the strength that comes from vulnerability."

Wilmarie's hobbies reflect her love for creativity and community engagement. She enjoys creating content and promoting local businesses on her Instagram account, @wilderza. "This hobby feeds my creativity and enables me to connect with my community," she explains. She also has a passion for photography, fashion, hiking, and, more recently, adult ballet. "I adore dancing! It allows me to express myself in a unique way."

Beyond her personal interests, Wilmarie is passionate about giving back. She admires the work of Isibindi, an organization supported by her local church, Groote Kerk. "Their commitment to providing a safe and nurturing space for youth and children is commendable," she says. "I hope to become more involved and contribute to their mission."

If she were to win Mrs. South Africa, she envisions using her title to support youth and women's empowerment, as well as educational programs. "I want to amplify the resources and visibility of initiatives like Isibindi. I hope to inspire perseverance, creativity, and self-belief among our youth, creating an environment that fosters growth and connection."

Wilmarie has faced many personal challenges, including the loss of her father at a young age, as well as other close family members. "Each obstacle has shaped me, improving my adaptability and fueling my passion for helping others," she shares. "I believe I have a story of perseverance and heart. My high school's motto, 'Sibi Fidelis Ipsi'—Latin for 'True to Oneself'—has stayed with me throughout my life."

In the next five years, she sees herself further involved in community advocacy and possibly exploring a new career in a creative field or media. "Professionally, I aspire to improve my role within the dental field while also nurturing a welcoming environment for patients," she adds. "Personally, I hope to cultivate a loving family and create a home that fosters passion and creativity."

Her biggest goal right now is enhancing her skills in public speaking, leadership, and community engagement. "I want to serve as a role model for female empowerment and create a positive, uplifted community around me," she says.

To Wilmarie, beauty is about authenticity and grace, while empowerment is about owning one's story and lifting others up. "In today's world, it's essential to celebrate diverse beauty and female empowerment, not just as individuals, but as communities as well," she believes.

For those considering entering Mrs. South Africa, she has a simple yet powerful message: "Welcome vulnerability and authenticity. Each of us brings a unique story and perspective. Surround yourself with a good support network, be open to growth, and allow yourself the grace to learn and evolve."

Wilmarie Kriel is a woman on a mission—to inspire, uplift, and transform. With her drive and passion, she is poised to make a lasting impact in her community and beyond.

Photo credit: Marilienke Gunter
Instagram: @wilderza, Facebook:
Wilmarie Kriel, Tiktok: @wilmariekriel,
Threads: @wilderza, Youtube:
@wilderza



Rejaen Marais

PPMC MAGAZINE ISSUE 141

How 26-Year-Old Grade R Teacher Rejaen Marais Balances Teaching,
Modeling, Photography, and Baking While Chasing Her Dreams

Interview with Rejaen Marais

A Passion for Teaching



At 26 years old, Rejaen Marais is living a life filled with passion and purpose. By day, she is a dedicated Grade R teacher, shaping the minds of 40 energetic five-year-olds. By night, she pursues her dreams in modeling, photography, and baking, juggling her many interests with an undeniable drive.

"I can still remember playing teacher-teacher as a child. I never really thought that it would become my career," she shares with a smile. Though she once considered working with animals, her path took a different turn in matric, not because of any defining moment, but simply because her heart led her toward education.

Each child in her class holds a special place in her heart. "I look past the challenges and love each one individually. They make me laugh every day," she says. Despite the difficulties of the current education system, she remains committed. "Some days, it gets overwhelming. I try to make learning fun with games and songs, but there are moments where I need to take a breath—or ten!" Still, she makes sure to speak to each child one-on-one every day. "I want to check in, to make sure they're okay."

For Rejaen, the most rewarding part of teaching is seeing her learners grow and knowing that she has made a difference in their lives.

"When they greet me from far, even after they've moved on to other grades, it makes me feel so special. I believe I am where I am for a reason. Jesus chose me to be here, and that keeps my passion alive."

Despite her full-time career as a teacher, Rejaen has found a way to embrace her love for modeling. "Going for endless castings can be draining, especially since I live two hours from Johannesburg, but I told myself that if I wanted to be a model, I needed to give it my all," she explains. Her persistence paid off. "I kept attending castings until there was a breakthrough. I got to experience being on set, not once, but twice."

Being in front of the camera was everything she imagined and more. "I always thought it was only on TV where people get treated like royalty on set, but believe me, I was treated with so much respect. I will never forget how I felt in that moment, living my dream."

Beyond modeling, photography is another creative outlet that brings her joy. "I'm not a professional photographer, but I'd love to be one day," she says. "Photography helps relieve my stress—it's calming and allows me to express my feelings." She enjoys capturing lifestyle and outdoor photos and

prepares carefully for her shoots. "I go over my poses, research the photographer's work, take care of my skin, and make sure I get enough sleep."

Baking is yet another passion that connects her to her roots. "My grandma used to bake cookies and cakes, and I developed a love for it. It relaxes my mind," she says. She enjoys baking with her younger sister and often shares her creations with loved ones. "It influences my teaching positively, too. I can incorporate it into my lessons and share my love for it with my learners."

As someone who constantly pushes herself to new heights, Rejaen has big dreams for the future. "I want to enter the National Teaching Awards this year and showcase my strategies and passion. In modeling, I hope to work with big brands and feature in clothing stores or billboards.

And yes," she adds with a laugh, "I will be entering Miss SA for the fourth time this year. Every year, I tell myself not again, but then I find myself entering anyway. I don't know what they are looking for, but I hope that one day it will be something that I have."

One thing is certain—whether she's in the classroom, on set, or behind the camera, Rejaen Marais pours her heart into everything she does. "I hope you lived with me as you read through my story," she says. And indeed, her passion is one that cannot be ignored.

Photo credit: Jaggers Photography

"I look past the challenges and love each one individually. They make me laugh every day"





Samantha
Gillion



Samantha Gillion is a woman on a mission. A wife, mother of two, co-founder of Edify Her, and author of Love Says, Samantha is passionate about empowering women, especially young girls, to embrace their identity in Christ and walk confidently in who they are. "Entering Mrs. South Africa is not just about a title for me—it's about being a living example to my children," she says. "This journey is an opportunity to amplify my mission of inspiring women to know their worth and step boldly into their calling."

Being named a Mrs. South Africa Semi-Finalist is a significant moment in Samantha's journey. "It is an honor and a privilege," she shares. "It represents a platform where I can use my voice to uplift and encourage women, particularly mothers and daughters, to embrace confidence, faith, and self-worth." For Samantha, beauty is not just about appearance but about the impact one has on others' lives.

Throughout the competition, Samantha has found that the experience has deepened her commitment to personal growth and leadership. "It has reinforced my belief that every woman carries a unique light, and when we step into our God-given purpose, we inspire those around us," she explains. The process has helped her balance multiple roles while staying true to her mission of helping others grow in confidence.

In her personal life, Samantha enjoys spending time with her family, reading, writing, and supporting women in their personal and spiritual growth. Fitness and wellness are also important to her, as she believes that taking care of her body helps her show up fully in every area of life. "These hobbies keep me grounded and allow me to continuously grow in faith, wisdom, and confidence," she says.

Samantha's career journey has been an interesting one. As an accountant by trade, she has recently ventured into the marketing space, discovering a creative side of herself. "It's been an exciting shift that has challenged and inspired me in new ways," she says. At 41, Samantha has also taken up running and is training for her first 10km race at the end of

March. "It's a new challenge that has pushed me to be even more disciplined," she adds. Balancing her career, family life, and personal interests is a continuous journey for Samantha. As a homeschooling mom who works full-time, she relies on faith, structure, and time management. "My family is my greatest priority, and I ensure that my personal and professional commitments align with my values," she explains. Faith and self-care are crucial to her, helping her stay centered amid a busy life.

One of the causes that Samantha is deeply passionate about is Edify Her, the community project she co-founded with her friend Berenice Kogana. The project aims to empower young girls through workshops that build confidence, self-worth, and faith. "I also have a deep passion for making my book, Love Says, available to as many young girls as possible at no cost," Samantha says. "I believe that if they encounter the unconditional love of Christ, they will walk in unshakable confidence and purpose."

If crowned Mrs. South Africa, Samantha has clear plans to use her title to continue serving her community. "I would use the platform to expand Edify Her workshops, promote confidence-building programs, and make Love Says more widely accessible," she explains. "I also want to encourage mothers to lead with confidence, knowing they are shaping the next generation." Her mission is to inspire women to walk boldly in their God-given confidence and use their voices to create positive change.

Through her platform, Samantha hopes to spread the message that "you are deeply loved, wonderfully created, and called for a purpose." She believes that true beauty comes from knowing who you are in Christ and living in the confidence of that truth. "When women walk in faith, confidence, and purpose, they create a ripple effect that transforms families and communities."

Looking ahead, Samantha envisions continuing her work with Edify Her, expanding her impact in personal branding, confidence coaching, and leadership development. "Personally, I

want to grow in my faith, be an even more present mother and wife, and continue building a legacy of love and empowerment," she shares. Her current focus is on making Love Says accessible to as many young girls as possible and growing Edify Her into a movement that transforms lives.

Samantha acknowledges that the journey hasn't been without its challenges. "Balancing multiple responsibilities while staying true to my mission is not always easy," she admits. "However, through prayer, faith, and unwavering determination, I push forward." For her, challenges are opportunities for growth, and she believes that with the right mindset, they can become stepping stones to greater impact.

For other women considering entering Mrs. South Africa, Samantha offers this advice: "If you feel called to this journey, step into it boldly. Mrs. South Africa is not just about outer beauty—it's a transformative experience rooted in self-development, community, network, and platform. Embrace every challenge as an opportunity, and remember that your purpose is greater than any title."

Samantha Gillion is a true example of living with purpose and using one's voice to make a meaningful difference in the world. Her journey, both as a woman and a Semi-Finalist for Mrs. South Africa, continues to inspire and empower others to walk boldly in their confidence, faith, and purpose.



Photo credit: @nicoledutoitphotography

A woman with dark hair styled in an updo, wearing a white strapless dress, a fishnet veil, and a multi-strand pearl necklace. She is posing against a light-colored, textured wall. Large, semi-transparent text is overlaid on the image.

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PPMC

Dani

**Visionary Photoshoot Celebrating
Confidence and Style**

Photographer: Veronique Photography
Hair & Makeup: Mana Makeup
Dress Miss Friday YDE
Location: Cape Town, South Africa



Danè van der Westhuizen recently collaborated with Veronique Photography for a stunning photoshoot that reflects her personality and style. "I wanted to update my portfolio with something that truly represents me," she says. Having admired Veronique Photography's work for some time, she jumped at the opportunity to bring her vision to life. "Everything from the lighting to the energy on set felt just right. The final shots turned out even better than I imagined."

The creative vision behind the shoot was about celebrating confidence and individuality. "I wanted to capture a mix of elegance and edge, showing different sides of my personality," Danè explains. Every detail was carefully planned, from the bold, modern aesthetic of the location to the outfits that balanced sophistication with a touch of drama. "Veronique Photography's eye for detail brought everything together beautifully. The final images truly reflect the energy and story we wanted to tell."

Being in front of the camera was a powerful experience for Danè. "I felt a mix of excitement and confidence," she shares. One of the challenges she faced was perfecting movement in certain shots. "It took a couple of tries, but once we got it, the result was amazing."

Mana Makeup played a key role in enhancing her look. "They created a flawless, glowing complexion with soft, sculpted contours that complemented the lighting perfectly," she says. The eye makeup struck the right balance of drama and sophistication, and the finishing touch was a bold red lip. "It's my favorite—it makes me feel like I can take on the world."

For Danè, working with different photographers and makeup artists is one of the most exciting aspects of modeling. "Every artist has their own unique style and vision, which challenges me to step into different looks, moods, and storytelling approaches," she says. She loves how each collaboration brings fresh creativity and allows her to explore new aspects of her craft. "Beyond that, the energy on set is always exciting. I love connecting with passionate creatives and bringing

ideas to life together." Her personal modeling style is a mix of elegance and confidence with a touch of versatility. "I love bringing emotion and storytelling into my poses, whether it's through powerful expressions or fluid movement," she explains. For Danè, modeling isn't just about looking good—it's about creating a feeling, a moment, and a connection through the lens.

One of her favorite shoots so far has been with Miss Friday YDE last year. "I would love to work with them permanently when I'm older," she says enthusiastically.

Danè believes that preparation, collaboration, and energy are the key ingredients to a successful photoshoot. "When everyone on set shares a clear vision and communicates well, the creative process flows effortlessly," she says. Confidence and adaptability are also essential. "Sometimes the best shots come from spontaneous moments!"

Before a shoot, Danè prepares both mentally and physically. "I like to visualize the theme, go through inspiration boards, and listen to music that helps me get into the right mood," she says. Staying confident and present in the moment is crucial. "Physically, I prioritize hydration, skincare, and a good night's sleep to feel fresh and energized."

For aspiring models, Danè's advice is to believe in themselves and stay confident. "Your uniqueness is your strength," she says. Building a strong portfolio, working with different photographers, and networking are all essential. "Stay professional, be reliable, and take care of yourself, both physically and mentally." She also warns about industry scams. "Always do your research before signing anything. The industry can be tough, but with passion, persistence, and the right mindset, you can carve your own path to success."

Looking ahead, Danè wants to continue building a diverse portfolio and working with talented photographers and stylists. "In the long term, I'd love to collaborate

with well-known fashion brands and eventually become a global ambassador for brands I truly resonate with," she shares. She also hopes to inspire others to embrace their uniqueness and challenge beauty standards in the industry.

If she could collaborate with any photographer, Willem Botha would be her top choice. "His ability to capture raw emotions and tell powerful stories through imagery is next level," she says. "He looks like a stunning person to work with." As for brands, YDE is at the top of her list. "They empower women to embrace their individuality. I believe my voice and style would complement their message, and together, we could inspire others to be bold and authentic."



Miss Cosmo South Africa 2025 Finalist

Susan Muller

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*I want future generations
to grow up understanding
these issues and knowing
how to handle them.*

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Susan Muller is a finalist in Miss Cosmo South Africa 2025, representing the Western Cape on a national stage. For her, this opportunity is more than just a title; it's a platform to inspire and create change. "I am extremely honored to be able to represent the Western Cape in this pageant," she says. "This would be my first national pageant, and hopefully, I get the honor to represent South Africa internationally."

Beyond the glitz and glamour of pageantry, Susan is the founder of the STOP Foundation, an initiative dedicated to raising awareness about bullying and mental health. The foundation was born out of personal hardship. "I was bullied on social media when I entered Miss South Africa 2024. My video went viral for the wrong reasons, and it had a huge impact on my mental health," she shares. "I have experienced a lot of bullying in my life, and I've seen others around me suffer too. That's why I decided to take action and make a promise to South Africa that I will stand up for mental health and bullying by educating people of all ages."

Susan's experiences with bullying have shaped her mission. "I was bullied in primary school because my mother had cancer, and again in high school because of my weight," she recalls. "Even worse, I almost lost my best friend to mental health struggles. There is so

much stigma around mental health, and I want to break down those barriers. Everyone deserves to be heard."

The STOP Foundation provides individuals with tools to navigate the effects of bullying and mental health struggles. The foundation's name itself serves as a guide: "S stands for Seek help, T is for Talk about what you are going through, O is for Observe what's happening around you, and P is for Persevere or Prevent bullying from continuing. It's important for people to know that they are not alone and that there are steps they can take."

One of the ways Susan empowers those who seek support is through storytelling. "We encourage people to share their experiences, whether anonymously or by name. This helps others realize they're not alone," she explains. "I know from personal experience how isolating bullying and mental health struggles can be, so creating a community where people can connect and support each other is so important."

As a Miss Cosmo South Africa finalist, Susan is using her platform to spread awareness about these issues. "I'm collaborating with organizations and making a real impact in communities. If I win the title, I know I can reach even more people and take my advocacy beyond South Africa."

Her work with the STOP Foundation has already brought meaningful moments. "Partnering with the Stellenbosch Hospice was deeply personal for me. I lost my grandmother to cancer last year, and I know how difficult and lonely that journey can be. I want to bring a little light to people going through similar experiences," she shares. Another highlight was speaking at Bastion Primary School. "The engagement with the students was incredible. It showed me how serious this issue is and reinforced my passion for speaking at more schools."

Balancing pageantry, advocacy, and personal life isn't easy, but Susan embraces the challenge. "I'm also in my third year of studying digital marketing and communication at Inscape in Stellenbosch. Juggling everything is tough, and sometimes the pressure gets

to me, but it's all worth it. Every time I visit schools or nonprofit organizations, I remind myself why I do this."

Her personal journey with bullying has reshaped her perspective on life. "It has taught me to take other people's feelings into consideration and to be mindful of the power of words. My goal is to create real change and live a successful and fulfilling life. The key is to push through even when things get tough. Better days are always ahead."

With the Miss Cosmo South Africa finale approaching in March, Susan is using this time to amplify her message. "I plan to stay active on the STOP Foundation's platforms, hosting Wellness Wednesday live sessions with professionals to spread awareness."

To maintain her own well-being, Susan prioritizes exercise and quality time with loved ones. Looking to the future, she envisions STOP Foundation collaborating with the government to integrate mental health education into schools. "I want future generations to grow up understanding these issues and knowing how to handle them. As for my pageantry journey, I hope to enter Miss World South Africa and maybe even Miss South Africa again. But no matter where my career takes me, my foundation will always come first."

Susan Muller is not just a pageant contestant; she is a changemaker, an advocate, and a voice for those who feel unheard. With passion, determination, and a heart for helping others, she is proving that true beauty lies in making a difference.





Manono Photography



Facebook: Manono Photography
Instagram: Manono Photography
TikTok: Manono Photography

Manono Bonginkosi Mdamba

Founder of Manono's Photography



Born and raised in KwaSokhulu, a rural area in KwaZulu-Natal, Manono Bonginkosi Mdamba now calls Richards Bay home. His journey into photography started with a simple camera borrowed from his sister, who worked at a backpackers' lodge in St. Lucia, now known as iSimangaliso Wetland Park.

"My brother, Bongani, and I would visit her during school holidays. She had an old camera, and she would let us borrow it when we visited the park. I used it to take photos of the animals and plants," Manono recalls. "That's where my passion started growing. When I got my first smartphone in high school, I started taking pictures of my friends and recording church services."

His dedication led him to work with a talented photographer, Mveliso Photography, who mentored him and provided valuable opportunities to refine his skills. This experience laid the foundation for his career and the birth of Manono Photography.

"I founded Manono Photography with a vision to capture life's precious moments, tell meaningful stories, and create timeless images," he says. "I wanted to build a business that allows me to connect with people and preserve their memories." Manono's photography style is a unique blend of documentary, portrait, and fine-art photography. He focuses on authenticity, emotion, and

visual storytelling. "I'm drawn to natural light, vibrant colors, and subtle textures that add depth and character to my images," he explains. For him, the most rewarding aspect of photography is the emotional connection people have with his work. "Seeing people relive cherished moments through my images is truly fulfilling. It motivates me to keep pushing myself." Understanding clients' needs is key to his success. "I take time to listen to their stories, goals, and vision. I ask open-ended questions and offer personalized solutions. Communication, empathy, and trust are essential in exceeding expectations."

Over the years, his work has evolved through experimentation, workshops, and collaborations. "Working with different clients, exploring new locations, and adapting to new technology has helped me grow. I've expanded my services to include videography and photography workshops."

Manono specializes in portrait, wedding, and documentary photography, but his true passion lies in capturing people and their stories. "I love authentic moments, emotions, and human connections. That's where I find my inspiration." To stay up to date with industry trends, he attends workshops, conferences, and online courses. "Social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook help me showcase my work, share behind-the-scenes insights, and connect with

clients." One of his most memorable photoshoots was with a couple celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary. "Spending the day capturing their love story, laughter, and tears was inspiring. Their devotion to each other was beautiful to witness." Balancing creativity with business is something he has learned along the way. "I set realistic goals and allocate time for administrative work, marketing, and creative projects. Surrounding myself with a supportive network of mentors, peers, and clients helps me stay focused."

For aspiring photographers, he offers simple yet valuable advice:

- Develop your craft: Keep learning, practicing, and refining your skills.
- Find your niche: Discover what you love and specialize in it.
- Build relationships: Connect with clients, collaborators, and mentors to grow your network.
- Stay authentic and patient: Be true to your artistic vision and keep going despite challenges.

Looking ahead, Manono has big plans for the future. "I want to expand Manono Photography's services and offer more workshops. I'm excited to collaborate with other creatives and work on a documentary series highlighting everyday heroes and change-makers."



"Seeing people relive cherished moments through my images is truly fulfilling. It motivates me to keep pushing myself."

IFBB SA Wellness O/166 Champion

Belinda Nel



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*Motivation can be
fleeting, but discipline
is what keeps me going.*

”

Interview with Belinda Nel

IFBB SA Wellness O/166 Champion



Belinda Nel is a powerhouse in the world of bodybuilding, achieving remarkable success on both national and international stages. She has been crowned Mpumalanga IFBB Wellness Champion for two consecutive years, holds the title of SA IFBB Wellness O/166 Champion, and has earned an impressive 5th place in both the World Championship Tokyo Japan O/168 and the Masters division (35-39 years) at the same event. Her journey is a testament to resilience, dedication, and an unwavering commitment to self-improvement.

Belinda has always been drawn to fitness and the discipline it demands. However, stepping onto the bodybuilding stage was about more than just staying in shape—it was about proving to herself that she could push beyond her limits and redefine what she was capable of achieving. “I started in the Bikini division, but as my physique developed, I naturally transitioned to Wellness,” she says. “The division celebrates strong, athletic lower bodies with balance and symmetry, which felt like the perfect fit for me.”

Her journey in the Wellness category has already seen impressive success. Placing 5th in both Wellness O/168 and Wellness Masters 35+ at the IFBB World Championships in Tokyo was a major milestone, marking her as a competitor to watch on the global stage. “Competing on the world stage was surreal,” she shares. “It was a huge achievement and validation of all the hard work, sacrifices, and discipline that went into my prep. It was emotional—

pride, gratitude, and hunger for even more success all at once.” As the current IFBB SA Wellness O/166 Champion, Belinda emphasizes that the most rewarding part of her journey has been her personal growth. “Winning titles is incredible, but the real victory is in the perseverance and proving to myself that I’m capable of more than I ever imagined,” she says. “Every challenge, every setback, and every moment of doubt has only made me stronger.”

Her preparation for competitions is intense, requiring structured training, strict nutrition, and mental fortitude. “My workouts are tailored to enhance my physique based on feedback from judges, with a heavy focus on lower-body development. Cardio increases closer to show day, and my diet is adjusted to peak perfectly. Recovery is just as important—proper sleep, mobility work, and managing stress all play a role in getting stage-ready,” she explains.

Balancing competing at an elite level with her passion for coaching is something Belinda manages carefully. “Coaching allows me to give back to a sport that has given me so much. Seeing my clients transform fuels my own motivation,” she says. “While competing demands a lot, I make sure to be present for my athletes, adjusting my availability when needed.”

Her daily routine is a testament to the dedication required in bodybuilding. “My days start early with fasted cardio, followed by strength training, where I focus on specific muscle groups depending on my prep phase. After check-ins with my clients and in-person training sessions, I make time for a midday nap to aid recovery. Nutrition is structured, and evenings are dedicated to mobility work, posing practice, and unwinding with my family before getting quality rest for the next day,” she says.

For aspiring athletes looking to compete in the Wellness division, she advises patience and consistency. “Results don’t happen overnight, but every training session and meal choice adds up. Focus on building a solid lower-body foundation—glutes, quads, and hamstrings are key. Find a coach who

understands the division and can guide you in both physique development and stage presentation,” she suggests.

Staying motivated and disciplined is crucial, especially when preparing for international competitions. “Motivation can be fleeting, but discipline is what keeps me going. Having a strong support system—my coaches, family, and fellow athletes—also plays a huge role. I set small milestones along the way to track progress and keep pushing forward,” she shares.

Belinda also addresses common misconceptions about bodybuilding and the Wellness category. “One big misconception is that it’s all about aesthetics. In reality, bodybuilding requires an extreme level of dedication, from training and dieting to the mental toughness needed to step on stage. Another is that Wellness athletes just have ‘big legs’ naturally—building the right shape and balance takes years of targeted training,” she explains.

Looking ahead, Belinda is focused on stepping onto the international stage again and bringing an even better package. “The ultimate dream would be earning my IFBB Elite Pro Card and representing South Africa at the highest level,” she says. “Beyond competing, I will definitely be sitting on the other side of the stage as a judge. I’ll be starting my IFBB Judging course very soon, continuing to coach online athletes, and assisting with posing techniques to help others refine their stage presence.”

Her impact goes beyond competitions, as she hopes to inspire others to embrace the lifestyle, commit to their goals, and challenge their limits. “Bodybuilding has changed my life in ways beyond the stage. It’s given me confidence, discipline, and a deeper understanding of my own strength—both physically and mentally.

It’s not just about the trophies; it’s about the lifestyle and the impact it has on every area of my life,” she says. With her relentless drive and passion, Belinda Nel is a true inspiration in the world of bodybuilding. Her journey continues, with new challenges, victories, and aspirations fueling her every step.

Printing Rights

Thato

**Redefining Womanhood as a Mrs.
South Africa 2025 Semi-Finalist**

You can connect with Thato Buthelezi on social media through her Facebook page, Thato Buthelezi, her Instagram handle @thato.mogotsi927, and on TikTok with the username @mshenge.

Interview with Thato Butelezi

Mrs. South Africa 2025 Semi-finalist



Thato Butelezi is more than a Mrs. South Africa Semi-Finalist; she is a wife, a mother of five, a businesswoman, a Psychology student (The South African College of Applied Psychology) at SACAP, and a woman in ministry. Married to a reverend, Thato entered the competition with a clear mission in mind. "I wanted to challenge societal norms, inspire other women to embrace their unique identities, and show that we are multifaceted beings capable of excelling in every role we take on," she says. Her passion lies in breaking stereotypes about reverends' wives and redefining what it means to be a woman of faith, purpose, and leadership.

For Thato, being a Mrs. South Africa Semi-Finalist is more than just a title. "This journey has given me the confidence to walk like a queen, with dignity and poise, and to never settle for anything less than the best," she shares. It has been a transformative experience, teaching her to value herself and embrace her uniqueness. "I no longer see myself as just Thato – I see myself as a woman with a greater mission to color the nation with positivity and love."

Beyond the competition, Thato enjoys exercising, singing, and reading. "Exercising is not just about looking fit and sexy – it is a form of therapy that helps me maintain my health and keep the doctor away," she explains. Reading

broadens her perspective, while singing, especially worship music, keeps her spiritually connected. "It serves as a constant reminder of God's presence in my life." Many people may not know that Thato is deeply spiritual and finds fulfillment in praying for others. "Being a reverend's wife is not just a title for me – it is a calling," she says. Her days are filled with balancing multiple responsibilities, but she remains intentional about making time for her family. "From Fridays to Sundays, it's strictly family time. Even if I miss some of my children's sports events, I make up for it by being fully present whenever I can."

Thato is passionate about the wellbeing of children. Through her church's mission work, she helps care for orphans by providing essentials and love. "Children are the beat of my heart – they represent purity, innocence, and the future," she says. If crowned Mrs. South Africa, her focus will be on children and the elderly, ensuring they have safe spaces, protection, and access to basic needs.

She is also passionate about mental health awareness, particularly in marginalized communities where it is often overlooked. "I would love to work closely with the youth, creating dynamic solutions to address their challenges and helping them discover their own unique potential."

Her message is clear: "Embrace your uniqueness. The world needs to see and experience your purpose on earth." She believes that many women limit themselves, thinking certain things are beyond their reach. "I want to inspire women to know that anything is possible through Christ who strengthens us."

Looking ahead, Thato envisions herself as a qualified psychologist in the next five years, helping people navigate mental health challenges. She also aims to grow her business and create job

opportunities, contributing to the economic empowerment of women and youth. "I see myself thriving as a leader, public speaker, and beacon of hope to others." Her biggest goal right now is to fully embrace her journey in the Mrs. South Africa platform while balancing her other commitments. "I want to use this platform to make a tangible impact in my community and inspire women to believe in themselves," she says. Completing her psychology degree and expanding her business are also top priorities.

Challenges have been part of the journey, particularly securing sponsors and meeting deadlines while juggling multiple responsibilities. "However, this has only fueled my determination to work harder and push beyond my limits," she says. "It has taught me perseverance and the power of asking for help when needed."

To Thato, beauty and empowerment are about authenticity and self-awareness. "True beauty shines when you embrace who you are without comparing yourself to others," she says. "Empowerment comes from knowing your worth and using your voice to uplift others."

For women aspiring to be part of Mrs. South Africa, her advice is simple: "Go for it! This journey is not just about the crown – it's about discovering the woman within you." She believes the experience will stretch, challenge, and reveal the power within. "It is a golden opportunity to redefine yourself, embrace your uniqueness, and step into your full purpose."



A portrait of Chrismie Mostert, a young woman with long, wavy brown hair, wearing a black dress with large ruffles on the shoulders and a red waistband. She is looking slightly to the side with a soft smile.

Cover Model

Chrismie Mostert

Winning the title of Miss Victorious 2024 Photogenic Overall Winner was a surreal experience for Chrismie Mostert. "It is an incredible honor! Winning the overall title for Miss Victorious was surreal!" she exclaims. "It was my first-ever photogenic competition, and it will always have a special place in my heart!" She didn't stop there.

Competing internationally in the Stars of the Universe competition through Talent Africa, she achieved gold in all nine categories and secured the Overall Junior Photogenic Winner title. "I was blown away!" she says. "These titles help me show children that no matter if you come from a small town, believe in yourself and reach for the stars! If you don't try, you will never succeed."

Chrismie is taking on another exciting challenge as a finalist in Miss Teen Universe South Africa 2025. "I want to use my platform to advocate for children

with learning disabilities," she explains. "This title is not just about beauty—it's about leadership, impact, and inspiring others to overcome their challenges." She believes that learning disabilities should not define a person's potential. "As a finalist, I have the opportunity to raise awareness and demonstrate that learning disabilities do not determine a person's potential."

Adding to her growing list of achievements, she has been named an ambassador for the Miss Teen Universe South Africa Perfume Collection. "I am so excited to be the Miss Teen Universe South Africa Perfume Ambassador for the Pink Territory Perfume Collection! The perfume collection is the first in history!" she shares. "This amazing opportunity allows me to travel across South Africa with the newly crowned Queens, making a positive impact in different communities."

Preparation for Miss Teen Universe South Africa 2025 is in full swing. "I am refining my runway skills, working on my public speaking, and staying physically and mentally strong. Most importantly, I am focusing on being the best version of myself—confident, kind, and determined!"

Chrismie is deeply passionate about advocating for children with learning disabilities. "I know exactly how it feels to struggle in school despite working hard," she says. "I have ADHD inattentive form, dyscalculia, and severe dyslexia, so I understand the frustration of being underestimated." She believes that awareness and education are key. "I want to show kids that they are capable of greatness, no matter their challenges. Not all of us belong in special needs schools—we need to be kept in normal society because after school, there are no 'special workplaces.'"



Her advocacy work is driven by a desire to create change. "Statistics show that 1.2 million children in South Africa have some form of learning disability. I want to see better accommodations in schools, more understanding from teachers, and greater access to resources like text-to-speech programs and extended time for tests," she explains. "South African education policies need to fully support children with learning disabilities so they have the same opportunities as everyone else."

Her personal experiences fuel her passion. "One of the biggest challenges we face is that teachers don't truly understand what we struggle with. The lack of knowledge is heartbreaking, and we endure humiliation almost daily," she reveals. "Imagine knowing the answers to a test but struggling to write them down. Many teenagers feel hopeless. Some turn to alcohol, others struggle with low confidence, and some even consider suicide because they are forced to feel like failures. The system is failing them, and it doesn't have to be this way."

Her message to children with learning disabilities is clear: "Educate yourself on how your brain works. Accept your challenges but don't fight them—find strategies that work for you. Don't compare yourself to others. Make technology your friend—speech-to-text, predictive text, and organizational apps can be game-changers. Most importantly, if you fail at something, don't give up. Keep pushing forward. Follow me, reach out—I'd love to share tips and support you on this journey. You're not alone!"

Balancing school, modeling, and advocacy work requires time management. "Education is very important to me, and being involved in pageantry does not negatively affect my schoolwork. The organization fully supports us in making sure school remains a top priority."

I'm just like any other child involved in extracurricular activities. It's all about managing your schedule and staying dedicated." She enjoys subjects like Natural Sciences and has big dreams for

the future. "It broadens my perspective on nature and helps me appreciate how amazing the world is," she says. "I have a strong passion for psychology and plan to earn a degree in it to help children with learning disabilities. At the same time, I dream of walking for major brands like Chanel, Versace, and Prada one day. Most importantly, I want to stay true to myself."

Outside of modeling, she enjoys cheerleading. "I'm a proud member of my school's team! I love dancing, being part of a team, and the energy that comes with it," she says. "I also enjoy reading, staying active with daily exercise, and going to the gym."

Chrizmie's biggest supporter is her mother. "She's always cheering me on and being honest with me, even when I don't want to hear it," she laughs. "But I also have an incredible support system—my whole family stands behind me. My photographer, Warren Wade, and my makeup artist, Tasmiya from @makeupmaze_ have also believed in me since day one. I'm incredibly thankful for my sponsors who help make my dreams possible. I don't take credit for my achievements alone; they are shared successes with everyone who has been part of my journey."

One of the biggest challenges she has faced in pageantry is finding outfits. "Especially evening gowns or unique pieces—it's difficult in a small town. But I always find a way to make it work." Another challenge is her advocacy work. "Hearing the struggles of children with learning disabilities touches me. I wish I had the funds to help more children get professionally diagnosed."

Her advice to young girls is to take part in Miss Teen Universe South Africa. "This journey has opened so many doors for me. It's not about winning a crown—it's about personal growth and making a difference in the lives of others."

She encourages them to follow her journey on Instagram @chrizmie_mostert and Facebook: Chrizmie Mostert. "Follow my journey on @missteenuniverse_southafrica and don't miss out!"



A full-length portrait of a woman with long, wavy, dark reddish-brown hair, smiling at the camera. She is wearing a black, sleeveless, sequined dress with a deep V-neckline. Her right hand is on her hip, and her left hand is at her side. The background is dark and textured. A large, semi-transparent watermark "Roxanne" is visible across the center of the image.

Roxanne
Clements

Interview with Roxanne Clements

Founder of Iconic Pageants



Roxanne Clements is the visionary behind Iconic Pageants, a platform designed to celebrate beauty, talent, intelligence, and community service. Unlike traditional pageants, Iconic Pageants places a strong emphasis on empowerment and inclusivity. "My platform encourages contestants to engage in meaningful social causes, helping them use their voice for change," says Roxanne. She is passionate about ensuring that participants from all backgrounds feel valued and welcomed.

Empowerment is at the heart of this pageant. Roxanne believes that every contestant has a unique story and the potential to inspire others. "I encourage contestants to embrace their individuality and use their experiences to uplift those around them," she says. To achieve this, the pageant offers workshops on self-confidence, public speaking, leadership, and community service. "We want contestants to leave not only with a crown but with tools that empower them to excel in all areas of their lives."

Her mission is to foster self-confidence in every contestant while encouraging them to use their voice for positive change. "I aim to break traditional

pageant stereotypes and redefine what it means to be a 'queen,' focusing on values such as integrity, leadership, and compassion," she explains. Roxanne envisions a community where diversity is celebrated, and each participant has opportunities to grow personally, professionally, and socially.

Beyond the competition, Roxanne aims to provide contestants with lifelong benefits. "Through mentorship programs, skill-building workshops, and community service initiatives, we equip contestants with the tools they need to succeed," she shares. Contestants also join a strong network of alumni who continue to support each other beyond the pageant. "We want our contestants to walk away feeling more empowered, confident, and ready to make a positive impact in their communities and the world."

Integrity is the cornerstone of what she looks for in titleholders. "We seek individuals who demonstrate honesty, authenticity, and a strong moral compass," she says. Handling both success and setbacks with grace is another crucial quality. "A true titleholder must be able to learn from challenges and keep moving forward."

Iconic Pageants helps participants develop confidence in public speaking, improve their communication skills, and expand their networks. "Contestants are required to speak in front of an audience, answer judges' questions, and participate in interviews. This helps them articulate their thoughts clearly and effectively," Roxanne explains. The competition also introduces them to professionals, sponsors, and mentors, opening doors to valuable connections.

Launching a new pageant came with challenges. "Getting contestants to sign up was difficult because they had never heard of us and weren't sure it was worth their time and effort," she admits. However, by showcasing the mission and values of empowerment and community involvement, she attracted participants who shared her vision.

Looking ahead, Roxanne sees Iconic Pageants evolving into a widely recognized and influential platform.

"We'll expand our reach by attracting contestants from different backgrounds and challenging traditional beauty standards," she says. She also prioritizes transparency in judging, scoring, and contestant experiences. "Fairness and trust are key to building credibility." Future plans include forming strong partnerships with brands and organizations that align with their values. "We want this to be more than a competition; we want it to be a movement that empowers individuals to use their voices for positive change."

The competition spans a full year, from the finalists' sash ceremony to the grand gala event. "Throughout this journey, we offer training sessions to help contestants grow and reach their full potential," says Roxanne. Each contestant is encouraged to embrace the experience beyond winning. "It's not just about titles. It's about uncovering strength, courage, and grace within yourself. True beauty lies in authenticity, rising to challenges, and carrying yourself with kindness and confidence."

Inclusivity and diversity are fundamental principles of Iconic Pageants. "We create a welcoming and supportive environment where every contestant feels valued, regardless of their background, appearance, or identity," she explains. As this is the pageant's first year, there are no success stories yet, but Roxanne is hopeful that next year will bring many.

For aspiring contestants, Roxanne's advice is simple: "Judges appreciate contestants who are true to themselves. Share your story, passions, and goals honestly. Authenticity resonates with people and makes you stand out more than simply trying to fit a particular mold."

There are many ways to get involved with Iconic Pageants. "Businesses can enhance their brand visibility by partnering with us. Supporters can attend our events or contribute to community projects through donations or active participation," she says. More than just a pageant, Iconic Pageants is a platform for empowerment, growth, and lasting change.



Christy

**Multitalented Teen Pursues
Passion, Creativity & Growth**

Instagram: @susancotterill

Facebook: Susan Cotterill

Agency: Roberta Alessandri Models

Introducing Christy Cotterill

Multitalented Teen Carving Her Own Path



As Christy Cotterill prepares to turn 16, she has simple yet meaningful plans for her birthday. "I'm just going to be hanging out at home by the pool with a few friends," she says. But beyond birthday celebrations, Christy is a young woman with an extraordinary range of talents and interests, proving that passion and dedication can lead to incredible achievements.

One of Christy's unique abilities is her capacity to read and write in code, along with her ability to see a broader color spectrum. "Having a broader color spectrum helps me to see small details and appreciate the smaller things," she explains. "As for the code, it's perfect for when my dyslexia is really bad because instead of it being letters, it's symbols."

Rather than seeing her dyslexia as a limitation, Christy has turned it into a strength. "By learning differently and using code, it gives me a way to not let my dyslexia get in the way of life. It helps me see the world differently," she shares. "There are so many amazing people who have supported me along the way and instead of judging it as a disability, have helped me explore ways of doing things differently."

Beyond her unique abilities, Christy is a passionate writer. Her book, *The Sliest Fox*, started as a simple school essay before evolving into a gripping story.

"When my best friend proofread it, she wanted to know what happened next. That's how I started writing it," she recalls. "The plot follows Messiah, a character stuck in a life that no one should ever have. I put my all into it and use writing to escape everyday life." The first chapter has already been published on Wattpad, and the response has been overwhelmingly positive. "Everyone seems to really like it so far. They say it feels so real, like Messiah herself wrote it. I can't wait to see what people think when Chapter Two comes out."

Christy is also making impressive strides in Irish dancing. "Finally having all my soft shoe dances being Tus shows me that all my hard work and hours of practice have paid off," she says proudly. Irish dancing has been a transformative experience for her, not just physically but also mentally. "It strengthened my ankles, and I now have feeling in them after almost six years. But more than that, it helped me gain confidence. I finally had enough courage to be in my dance school's year-end concert, and I'll be joining them for a St. Patrick's Day display on 15 March."

Another exciting experience in Christy's journey was being a live mannequin for Edgars Pavilion. "It was such an unbelievable experience to do something so creative and see people's reactions when they walked past. It felt a little weird at first, but thanks to my Ritalin, it was easier to remain still. It was just hard sometimes to not burst out laughing or scratch an itch! At least we got to change position every five minutes with a break every 20 minutes."

Balancing so many creative pursuits might seem overwhelming, but Christy has found a way to make it work. "Thanks to being homeschooled, I don't have homework or forced extracurriculars that would normally take time away from teens. So whenever I feel inspired, I start writing, as long as I've done all my schoolwork for the day."

Her passion for helping others extends to working with children in a Godly play setting. "I absolutely love spending time with the children and building a bond with them. I really hope that they learn

to be filled with the joy of life and know that no matter what happens, there is always God watching over them and someone who loves them."

Modeling has also played a big role in Christy's personal growth. Being part of Roberta Alessandri Models has helped her build confidence, make friends, and improve her communication skills. "Seeing how we've all grown over the years and the beautiful young women we've become is amazing. Even if modeling takes me nowhere, the journey is what matters most."

With so many interests, staying motivated is essential. "I put 110% into everything because it's what I love," Christy says. "If you have the opportunity to try multiple interests, you should pursue them. As long as you are doing what you love, nothing can stop you. Never stop learning or trying new things."

Looking to the future, Christy has ambitious plans. "I'm going to start studying criminology and hope to find a career in that. However, I would ultimately like to use that knowledge to help me in my writing and hopefully become a successful writer too. Irish dancing will always be a fun pastime and hobby, and I'll continue modeling because I just love doing it. The future can never be confirmed, but I can try and guide it. As long as I have my friends and family supporting me, I know the future will be bright."

To keep up with Christy's inspiring journey, check out her book *The Sliest Fox* on Wattpad and stay tuned for updates on her Irish dancing performances and modeling career.





Camelita Poate

PPMC MAGAZINE ISSUE 141

From Overcoming Hardships to Empowering Others — A Journey of Resilience, Passion, and Purpose in Pageantry and Community Advocacy



Camelita Poate, a 42-year-old mother of two, and a devoted wife, hails from the heart of Bishop Lavis in the Cape Flats. Born into a large family, her childhood was marked by challenges. "Life was tough growing up, with no electricity and many nights we had porridge for supper," she recalls. Despite these hardships, Camelita's determination remained unwavering.

At the age of 36, she made the bold decision to further her education. By the time she turned 40, Camelita had earned a Diploma in Human Resource Management from CPUT.

While juggling family life, Camelita discovered a passion for sewing, choreographing, and teaching dance. She's also involved in Exposé the Fashion Show, having participated in two shows so far. It was during this period that Camelita found her way into pageantry. "Pageants came first. My first ever pageant was in 2023 with OMT Pageants," she says.

Though modeling was always a childhood dream, it wasn't until she reached the age of 40 that she began her journey in pageantry. "As a child, yes, I always wanted to be a model until I discovered pageantry at the age of 40," Camelita admits.

Her personal style is deeply inspired by her mother, a woman who has always been fond of high heels. "Even now, at the age of 67, she still wears heels, and that is where my inspiration came from and still does," Camelita shares with pride.

Known for her bubbly personality, Camelita describes herself as "strong-willed and very determined." Her sense of humor and confidence make her a standout, and though she admits she might not always be right, she's "seldomly wrong."

Advocacy plays a significant role in Camelita's life, and she's passionate about raising awareness for causes close to her heart. "I advocate for poverty and gangsterism," she reveals. "Poverty shouldn't keep us bounded to where we are. We can rise above our circumstances. Gangsterism, you can

say no and move away. I always share my personal story." One of her major projects is hosting an annual High Tea on August 9, where she addresses the psychological effects of gender-based violence (GBV). "This is my third Annual High Tea," Camelita notes. Looking to the future, she dreams of becoming the next Mrs. South Africa. "It's never about me; it will always be about how I've impacted someone's life and moved them to make life-changing decisions."

In ten years, Camelita envisions herself as a business owner in the printing industry, with a side hustle in sublimation and DTF printing. Additionally, she sees herself as a motivational speaker and MC, roles she's already taken on.

The most influential people in her life are her mother, brother, and husband. "My mother, same as me, not always right and seldomly wrong," Camelita says with a smile. "My brother has the art of making a perfect distinction between right and wrong, and that has always been my guide. My husband taught me that you should never do something with just one thing in mind but ensure your goal is bigger than what you went there for."

Reflecting on her past, Camelita says there's nothing she would change. "My past has taught me valuable life lessons, and all those lessons have shaped me into the person I am today. Without it, I probably would've been a shy person."

Camelita's greatest contribution to the community is her work with the Angel Community Outreach in Valhalla Park, where she coaches young girls and gives motivational talks. "My kids and I always assist parents with items their kids need. We've bought school clothes, books, and even hockey kits for those who need them," she shares.

When asked what beauty means to her, Camelita answers with conviction: "Beauty is difference. It's the ability to accept that we are not all the same and therefore should not criticize or discriminate. We should let everyone see that there is beauty in difference." For fun, Camelita enjoys family holidays, especially at Jamaka Organic Farm and

Campsite in the Cederberg, during Easter, Christmas, and sometimes for birthdays. Looking ahead, Camelita's goals include becoming Mrs. South Africa, obtaining a degree in psychology, owning a business, and becoming a homeowner. She is also deeply passionate about the #GBV movement, highlighting the positive aspect that it will never be forgotten or treated as a fleeting issue. However, she also points out a negative: "There is so much concentration on women and children, and while that's important, males are often forgotten, even though they go through the same challenges."

For those entering pageants, Camelita offers straightforward advice: "Step out and be bold. Just the thought of wanting to do it is an indication that there is much more inside of you that you are either too scared or shy to bring to the front. Be confident and take the leap of faith."

To connect with Camelita, you can find her on Instagram (@camelitaabrahams), Facebook (Camelita Poate), and TikTok (@Camzy_p). Camelita's impressive list of achievements includes titles such as Ms. Cape Rose 2024, 2nd Princess Royal Duchess 2024, and 2nd Princess Mrs. Charity 2024. With a heart full of ambition and a mind dedicated to making a difference, Camelita Poate is certainly a woman to watch in the world of pageantry and beyond.





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**Chasing Crowns and Breaking
Boundaries with Confidence**

Follow Melissa's journey on Instagram:
@missglamworld, @misshotlegssa, and
@melissamoyani. She welcomes all the
support she can get as she prepares to
take on the world.

Interview with Melissa Moyani

Heading to Miss Glam World in India

A story by:
Etaiya
Briscoe



Melissa Moyani, a 22-year-old from Boksburg, has made her mark in the pageant world as the 1st Princess of Miss Hotlegs South Africa 2024/2025. She attended Dawn Park Primary and Sunward Park High and is currently furthering her studies in law. She previously obtained a diploma in law from IIE Varsity College and is now pursuing her degree. Her hobbies include cheerleading, swimming, and playing the piano, but her biggest passion is chasing crowns and using her platform to inspire others.

"To be quite honest, I had no idea why I joined this pageant at first," Melissa admits. "I am known as the Crown Chaser because of the number of pageants I participate in within a short period of time. When I researched Miss Hotlegs SA and saw the slogan 'Beauty Beyond Boundaries,' it stood out to me. I wanted to understand what it meant and how it resonated with me."

For Melissa, the message hit close to home. "I spent my pre-teen and teenage years being bullied for a scar I have. But I told myself I would never let that take away my dreams. I wanted to share a message and be a force, and this pageant was the right place to do that."

The journey to the crown was anything but easy. "There were times I wanted to back down, but then I reminded myself why I was here and how far I had come," she shares. Financial struggles made preparation even more difficult. "When I joined the pageant, I was in financial distress, but I knew I still wanted to be a part of this. I like a challenge and will not back down under any circumstances. I found ways to make ends meet and made it possible."

Melissa learned valuable lessons throughout the competition. "This pageant has taught me trust and acceptance. I was used to working alone, thinking only my way was the right way. But opening up about my scar to my fellow sisters helped me build trust. For once, I didn't feel rejected or ashamed of who I am. That gave me the drive to work even harder and never doubt myself again."

She believes that a true pageant winner should have determination, dedication, and perseverance. "Never backing down from a fight, being a leader, and having the dedication to lead. Lastly, the determination to not only lead but to serve as the Queen."

One of the most unforgettable moments in her journey was the crowning on November 3, 2024. "That's when I knew—I MADE IT. My prayers had been answered. Alongside my big win, I get to represent my country at Miss Glam World in India in July 2025. This is every girl's dream! I have been joining every pageant I could in hopes of one day representing my country and making a difference—not only in South Africa but all around the world."

Despite her extensive pageant experience, Melissa remains open to learning. "This was actually one of the questions I got in the Top 5 finale: Whether it's your first pageant or your 100th, we are all here to learn. That's what makes pageantry fun—you can never know too much. As long as you put in the work, make the sacrifices,

carry yourself well, and never give up, you will stand out." Melissa has big plans for the opportunities that come with her title. "First, I will remain humble. I plan to make multiple appearances, spread the word about the pageant, and start a Brother/Sister initiative for teenagers battling issues alone with no one to trust or talk to."

I also want to build a name for my country on social media and let everyone know that MELISSA MOYANI IS COMING! I am super excited for this journey, as it will be my first time representing my country on an international stage."

Her advice to aspiring pageant contestants is simple but powerful. "Keep knocking. Not all doors are closed. And if you reach a point where no doors are opening, remind yourself that you are still knocking on the wrong doors. Have faith and never back down because when you think about giving up, you may find that you are just one door closer to victory."

Follow Melissa's journey on Instagram: @missglamworld, @misshotlegssa, and @melissamoyani. She welcomes all the support she can get as she prepares to take on the world.





Nadine & Nicole Houlson

PPMC MAGAZINE ISSUE 141

Redefining Makeup Artistry with Passion, Precision, and a Personal Touch.

“One of our main goals is to have our own makeup brand one day!”

Nadine and Nicole Houlson

Founders of Houlson Beauty



Nadine and Nicole Houlson share more than just identical looks—they share a deep passion for beauty and empowering women. Their journey in the beauty industry began with a fascination for the diversity of human beauty and its impact on confidence. "At Houlson Beauty, our mission is to provide personalized beauty services that make women feel seen, heard, and beautiful—inside and out," they explain.

What sets Houlson Beauty apart is the unique dynamic of identical twin makeup artists. "We're redefining the art of makeup with a unique twist—double the talent, double the beauty," they say. Their precision, creativity, and attention to detail make them stand out in the industry. "Our brand promise? Double the beauty, perfection guaranteed."

Starting a business came with its challenges. "In the beginning, we struggled to fully understand each client's vision," they admit. Communication was another hurdle. "We had to learn to ask the right questions and actively listen to what our clients wanted." Through detailed consultations, they ensure they understand preferences, dislikes, and beauty goals. "Clear communication is key. We confirm everything with our clients to avoid any miscommunication."

Houlson Beauty specializes in accentuating each client's natural beauty. "We believe a flawless

foundation is essential. Perfect style for each individual canvas," they emphasize. Their signature techniques include customized foundation matching and enhancing natural features. "By perfecting the foundation and subtly enhancing features like the eyes, brows, and lips, we create a timeless, elegant look."

When it comes to must-have beauty products, they have their favorites. "A high-quality primer sets the tone for flawless makeup," they say. "Invest in a premium foundation, long-lasting lip products, and a great mascara—they make all the difference." Their kits include high-end MUD products for special occasions and Smink products for everyday use. "These products help us create stunning, long-lasting looks."

Every transformation at Houlson Beauty is special. "We take pride in every makeup application. Seeing the confidence boost in our clients is incredibly rewarding." Personalized beauty experiences are at the heart of their service. "Our before-and-after photos showcase the dramatic difference our expertise can make. We want each client to feel confident, beautiful, and valued."

Since launching Houlson Beauty, the twins have built a loyal customer base and strengthened their reputation. "We've expanded our services, kept up with trends, and used social media to

reach more people." Looking ahead, they have ambitious goals. "We want to introduce new beauty solutions and collaborations. Our ultimate dream? Launching our own makeup line tailored to our clients' needs. Glory to God for our talent!"

Exciting things are on the horizon. "We're introducing new products and continuing to grow through education and training. Staying ahead in the beauty industry is important to us."

For aspiring beauty entrepreneurs, they offer valuable advice. "Believe in yourself. Confidence is key. Love what you do, because passion is contagious. Integrity matters—treat people with kindness and respect. Be on time, stay humble, and always be open to learning."

Their motivation comes from the joy of meeting incredible people and being part of their special moments. "Knowing clients trust us with their biggest events is an honor. Watching their confidence grow is what drives us every day." The artistry, the transformations, and the connections they make keep their passion alive. "We love what we do, and we put our hearts into every look we create."

Facebook: Houlson Beauty
Instagram: @houlson_beauty
TikTok: @houlsonnbeauty





Deon Greeff

PPMC MAGAZINE ISSUE 141

Facebook: DynamiqPhotography
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Interview with Deon Greeff

Founder of Dynamiq Photography

A story by:
Etaiya
Briscoe



For Deon Greeff, photography has always been more than just taking pictures—it's a way of seeing and expressing the world. His journey started at the age of eight when he got his first Kodak box camera, sparking a lifelong love for capturing moments. "Photography isn't just a job or a hobby—it's my creative space," Deon shares. In 2010, he took a big step by investing in his first digital camera, a Canon 40D, setting him on the path to becoming the photographer he is today.

Balancing a full-time sales job during the week, Deon dedicates most of his weekends to photoshoots. His expertise spans weddings, maternity, family, couple, engagement, portrait, and model portfolio photography. While editing can sometimes be overwhelming, his passion keeps him going. "I'm always chasing after the perfect shot—though I think every photographer knows that feeling of never quite getting there. It's what keeps me going!"

Looking back, Deon wishes he had known the importance of community and mentorship. "Photography can feel like a solo journey, but learning from others makes all the difference," he says. His skills have been shaped by constant practice, making mistakes, and studying the work of other photographers. "I took photography courses, watched YouTube presentations, and always stayed open to learning."

Deon recommends YouTube for tutorials, Pinterest for inspiration, and Instagram for keeping up with trends. Honest feedback is also key to refining his work. "I ask for it. Sometimes I present my clients with different versions of the same image to see which one they prefer."

When it comes to equipment, Deon prefers Canon cameras with a mix of Canon and Sigma lenses, relying on Elinchrom and Hahnel lights for his shoots. His favorite lens? "The Sigma 50mm Art lens. It delivers incredibly sharp and clear images, perfect for portraits and detailed shots." Besides his camera and lens, he also carries speedlights, modifiers, diffusers, and a variable ND filter to handle different lighting conditions.

Over the years, Deon has learned to avoid common photography mistakes, including over-editing, ignoring lighting conditions, and relying too much on gear instead of mastering technique. His studio settings typically include f/5.6, 1/180 sec, ISO 100, while outdoor settings always depend on available light.

Choosing a favorite photograph is difficult. "Every great photo holds a special meaning, whether it's the emotion captured, the lighting, or the story behind it," he says. However, he recently completed a black-and-white shoot with Jeante from Figures

Boksburg at the end of 2024. "I've always loved the dramatic, high-contrast look of monochrome images. Everything came together perfectly."

Social media plays a big role in Deon's work. "It's the most powerful tool for photographers today. It's not just about showcasing work—it's a way to market yourself, connect with clients, and stay inspired." While he admires photography legends like Ansel Adams, Annie Leibovitz, and Steve McCurry, he finds a lot of inspiration from contemporary photographers pushing creative boundaries.

For those wanting to follow in his footsteps, Deon emphasizes the importance of smart marketing and continuous learning. "Photography is an oversaturated field, so the key to success is standing out. Invest in your skills, build your brand, and get your name out there. Passion and persistence will set you apart."

AI is one of the most exciting developments in photography. "It's both exciting and intimidating, but when used correctly, it can enhance creativity and streamline editing. The key is to use it as a tool rather than a crutch." When working with models or clients, Deon believes preparation is key. "I always plan the shoot in advance, including setup and concept ideas. I create a file with references to guide the shoot and make sure the model knows what to expect. A friendly and positive atmosphere goes a long way in making someone feel comfortable in front of the camera."

Though he doesn't typically shoot for magazines, Deon submits selected images to publications. "The challenge is making sure the images align with the magazine's style and standards."



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Leonel du Preez

PPMC MAGAZINE ISSUE 141

Mastering the Art of Juggling Netball and Modeling
While Striving for Excellence in Both Worlds

Introducing Leonel du Preez

A Life of Passion and Dedication



Photo credit: Manono Photography
Instagram: @leonel_dprz

Balancing two demanding passions like modeling and netball is no easy task, but for Leonel du Preez, it's a challenge worth embracing. "Both require a lot of training and take up a lot of time," Leonel explains. "Sometimes I have to do both in one weekend, and making time for everything can get quite hard. But I stay organized and focused, and I always have my friends and family supporting me."

For Leonel, modeling is more than just walking a runway or posing for a camera. It's about stepping out of her comfort zone and discovering new strengths. "The graduation was a very exciting experience," she says. "It wasn't just about the final grade; it was about enjoying the moment with my friends. Modeling has taught me confidence and pushed me to learn things I never thought I would."

One of her proudest moments was winning an award for Best Formal Wear. "It was such an exciting moment! I think what made me stand out was my beautiful red dress. It had amazing detail, it fitted perfectly, and it looked incredible."

Leonel's daily routine is packed. "I go to school every day, and on Tuesdays and Thursdays, I have netball practice after school. Most of my weekends are taken up by netball matches, photoshoots, or modeling events."

She stays on top of her schedule by setting goals and prioritizing what's most urgent. "I identify my goals, create a schedule, set boundaries, and always stay flexible."

Modeling gives Leonel the chance to express herself in different ways. "I love working with different photographers, makeup artists, designers, and stylists. Modeling also helps with self-confidence—pushing past self-doubt and embracing who I am."

Her journey in modeling started in an unexpected way. "I was in Pick n Pay when I saw my coach, Lesydie. She looked beautiful, with her hair and makeup done. I told her she looked amazing, and she handed me a Shadows School of Modeling card. That's when I knew I had to do this."

Netball, on the other hand, has taught her valuable life skills. "It's a physical sport that requires strong communication and quick reflexes. The skills I've gained on the court, like performing under pressure and learning from mistakes, have helped me a lot with my confidence in front of the camera."

Finding time for both sports and modeling isn't always easy. "Sometimes I have both netball and modeling in one weekend. I try to make time for both, but when I really can't, I have to choose which event is most important and inform my coaches."

Leonel looks up to several role models in both industries. "My coach, Lesydie, inspires me a lot. I wouldn't be where I am today without her. In modeling, I admire Kendall Jenner, Adriana Lima, Gigi and Bella Hadid, and Candice Swanepoel. I hope that with enough hard work, I can be like them one day. In netball, I look up to Catherine Cox, the Australian Goal Shooter. I love the way

she plays, and since goal shooter has always been my main position, I aspire to be like her."

Her biggest achievements so far include being chosen for a Valentine's shoot and being selected to model for nine designers in a non-profit event in Pietermaritzburg on 22 March 2025. In netball, making the tour team for this year is another highlight. "I'll be going on tour this upcoming vacation, and I'm so excited!" The pressure can be overwhelming at times. "It gets to be a lot, but I try to calm myself and not stress too much. I clear my mind to avoid getting overwhelmed."

Her advice to others is simple: "When it gets too much, don't give up. Juggling two or more things is a challenge, and you have to accept it. If times get tough, push through and find a solution. There have been many times I wanted to quit, but I kept pushing myself because when you've come so far, you can't just give up. If you give up, you might regret it later."

Leonel has big dreams for her future. "In netball, I want to play for the South African team, the Proteas. In modeling, I want to be on the cover of Vogue, model for Victoria's Secret or Calvin Klein, and walk for Miss South Africa and Miss Tourism. I want to make a living from netball and modeling because it's always been my dream to be a superstar in one of these fields." With her dedication and determination, there's no doubt that Leonel du Preez is on the path to making her dreams come true.



Pageantry & Photogenic Modeling

Mariska White



“

Embracing your uniqueness and staying true to yourself is key to making an impact.

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Interview with Mariska White

Journey of Passion and Purpose

A story by:
Etaiya
Briscoe



Mariska White has spent the past nine years making her mark in the world of pageantry and photogenic modeling. From a young age, she stepped onto the stage and into the spotlight, competing in various competitions and seizing every opportunity that came her way. "I can proudly say that I have won titles that I will forever be grateful for," she shares.

For Mariska, modeling is more than just a competition—it is a form of self-expression. "It gives me a way to express and be myself," she explains. "Modeling gives me the confidence to be the best me I could be." Her motivation comes from the ability to touch lives, whether through charity work or inspiring others to step onto the stage with confidence. "Knowing that others look up to me drives me forward," she says. One of her biggest goals is to launch a campaign dedicated to helping those in need.

Her journey has not always been easy. At one point, she found herself in a rut, simply going through the motions without truly enjoying the experience. This led to a break from modeling, a time when she believed she might never return. "One day, I called my mom and told her how much I missed my heels and my pageant sisters," she recalls. That realization reignited her passion and brought her back to the stage, where she faced one of her biggest challenges: "Me vs. Myself."

Mariska draws inspiration from many people, but one of her greatest role models is Rolene Strauss, Miss South Africa and Miss World. "She is more than just a titleholder—she is a medical graduate, a mother of three, and a woman with numerous achievements," Mariska says. Through Rolene's books, she has learned valuable lessons about balance and keeping God at the center of her life.

Her journey in modeling began with Angie Bryant, an inspiring woman and coach who played a significant role in shaping the model she is today. "Over the past nine years, I have learned more than just how to walk in high heels and elegant dresses—I have learned how to be myself and work hard for what I want to achieve," she says.

She is currently training under Deon Krause at SA All Star East Rand, where she continues to refine her skills. "From every training session to each pageant, he ignited my passion to do better and believe in myself. He always makes sure I look my best before I get on the ramp and motivates me to give my best before I walk."

Her style reflects confidence, elegance, and sophistication, but she believes true style is about more than just clothing. "It's about how you carry yourself," she says. She applies the same philosophy to her lifestyle—balancing luxury with warmth, strength with nurturing energy.

Health and wellness are also top priorities for Mariska. She trains with her netball team throughout the week, focusing on body strength and skills. "Nourishing my body with healthy foods that fuel me is essential," she says. To her, fitness and nutrition are forms of self-love.

Networking has played a significant role in her journey, allowing her to connect with a diverse range of people. "These connections contribute to my personal

growth and open doors to new opportunities," she says. Social media has been a powerful tool in her career, helping her showcase both her professional work and behind-the-scenes moments. "I strive to create a balance between my passion for modeling and my personal life, allowing my audience to connect with me on a deeper level."

Throughout the years, she has learned the importance of authenticity. "Embracing your uniqueness and staying true to yourself is key to making an impact," she says. "Knowing your values and striving to be the best version of yourself will set you apart." That is the advice she would give to other models who are just starting their journey.

Looking ahead, Mariska aspires to feature in various fashion shows, compete internationally, and use her experience to guide and mentor others. On a personal level, she dreams of traveling the world and graduating with a degree in medicine. "I want to help others while living life to the fullest," she says.

Her message to the world is simple yet powerful: "You were created for more than just living—you were created to shine, to lead, and to inspire. Know your worth, carry yourself with elegance and strength, trust the process, and most importantly, be yourself."



Photo credit: Odelya Macpherson
Dress: Chenine du Preez
Instagram: @mariska_white
Facebook: @Mariska White



Photo credit: @Coulson Art Photography

Janncke
Engels

Interview with Janneke Engels

Living Life to the Fullest

A story by:
Etaiya
Briscoe



At just 20 years old, Janneke Engels from Upington, Northern Cape, has already built an impressive modeling career while embracing her love for creativity, coaching, and the outdoors. "I'm a lovable and realistic person who enjoys trying new things," she says. Currently working as a tennis coach, she finds joy in being around children and helping them grow.

Janneke is a creative soul. She enjoys sketching, writing poems, and spending time in the garden, which she finds calming. Music is a big part of her life. "Everything I do, whether it's chores or cleaning, I listen to music," she shares. Passionate about the outdoors and animals, she never hesitates to help where she can.

Her journey in the modeling industry has been nothing short of remarkable. "I have accomplished a lot in modeling and pageants, but I love modeling more." In 2021, she was crowned 1st Princess at Miss Northern Cape and later won various photogenic competitions. In 2023, she won Face of Eden, which led to her being scouted for Show Your Talent in New York. "I won first prize in every category I entered," she proudly states. She was also selected for Project AIM 2024, a modeling event aboard the MSC cruise.

Janneke has graced the pages and covers of well-known fashion magazines, including Unplugged Magazine, PPMC Magazine, Lipstick Magazine, and Brand Magazine. "What I like most about modeling is the photogenic category. I feel most at home in front of the camera," she explains. The process excites her, from outfit changes to professional makeup. "I love being a part of it."

With experience in runway, commercial, photogenic, and pageants, Janneke has refined her skills through modeling workshops. "They taught us specific steps, how to present ourselves on the runway, and the emotions needed for

different categories." However, stepping onto the stage is always an emotional experience. "Before I step on that stage, I feel fear and anxiety, but once I'm there, it's just me and the clothes I'm wearing. Afterward, I feel relieved, excited, and happy." Handling feedback with an open mind is important to her. "If it's from professionals, I listen carefully because they want me to succeed. But if it's from people who know nothing about the industry, I listen but don't always act on it. If it's hateful feedback, I cut it out."

The longest photoshoot she has done was in Boksburg. "It was an eventful morning with lots of outfit changes and makeup touch-ups, but it was worth it." Janneke acknowledges the different personalities in the industry. "Some models are like a closed book, while others will chat your ears off. I try to communicate and make friends, but I respect everyone's way of focusing."

She finds motivation in social media, often watching short videos on TikTok and Instagram that help her shift her perspective. "My motivation in life is simple: don't be dependent on people. If you want something, do it yourself because not everyone will support your decisions."

Looking ahead, Janneke has big goals. "I've already achieved one of my professional goals—traveling overseas for modeling—but I'm never done achieving more. I want to go as far as possible in the modeling industry." When asked about where she sees herself in the future, she responds, "Probably overseas, busy with a photoshoot for a modeling magazine or anything related to modeling."

Despite her drive, Janneke admits to having FOMO, the fear of missing out. "I try to see it differently—maybe the next event will be bigger and more exciting. I encourage people to share their fears with someone they trust because you never know how you might help someone else."



Photo credit: @Donovan Eva, Make-up: Beauty and body by Lisa Viviers



@Van Vuuren Photography, Make-up By Stephan Venter, Hair: Salon Rejuvive



Madelein Smit

PPMC MAGAZINE ISSUE 141

Talented T.V Personality

Facebook: @madelein.smit.37

Instagram: @madelein_madness_

TikTok: @madelein_madness



Interview with Madelein Smit

Changing Lives on The Chair



Returning for a second season of The Chair is an emotional and exciting journey for Madelein Smit. “This opportunity fills my heart with immense gratitude,” she says. “Not only does it align with my passion for influencing people, especially the youth, but it also validates that the work I am doing is making an impact.” For her, the show is more than just television—it’s a platform to help job seekers find meaningful opportunities and transform their lives.

As the internal HR representative on the show, Madelein finds joy in seeing candidates succeed. “The most rewarding part of my role is witnessing the incredible potential of South Africa’s youth. They are ready to lead, and that excites me,” she shares. Seeing someone land a job after years of struggle is deeply humbling for her. “Their stories remind me how important it is to support one another.”

The first season of The Chair had a profound effect on her. “It reinforced my belief that anything is possible when you dare to dream,” she says. The show opened doors for her in the television industry, leading to a role as Assistant Director for SterStatus on ETV. Now, she is preparing to launch her own TV show later this year. “This journey has been life-changing.”

One moment from the first season stands out for her. “A candidate who was living on the streets landed a job that completely changed their life. Seeing that transformation was unforgettable,” she recalls. It was a moment that underscored the power of opportunity and hope.

Season two promises exciting new elements. “We are introducing a one-minute elevator pitch at the end of each episode,” she reveals. “This allows candidates to present themselves directly to potential employers in a powerful and effective way. It’s a game-changer for job seekers.”

Beyond the format changes, The Chair is shifting the way South Africans approach job hunting. “We are changing the landscape by sharing real stories and highlighting the challenges job seekers face,” she explains. By addressing these issues openly, the show not only educates viewers but also inspires action.

She has seen many common mistakes that job seekers make during interviews. “Preparation is everything!” she emphasizes. “Candidates who research the company and practice their responses always perform better. Knowing the company’s values and goals can make a big difference.”

Her role as an HR consultant on the show involves carefully assessing candidates. “I ensure we match the right talent with the right opportunities. It’s about creating connections that benefit both the job seeker and the employer.”

This season, the goal is to secure 52 job placements, and the selection process is rigorous. “We evaluate candidates based on their skills, experience, and fit for available roles. Our aim is to find placements that align with both employer needs and candidate aspirations,” she explains.

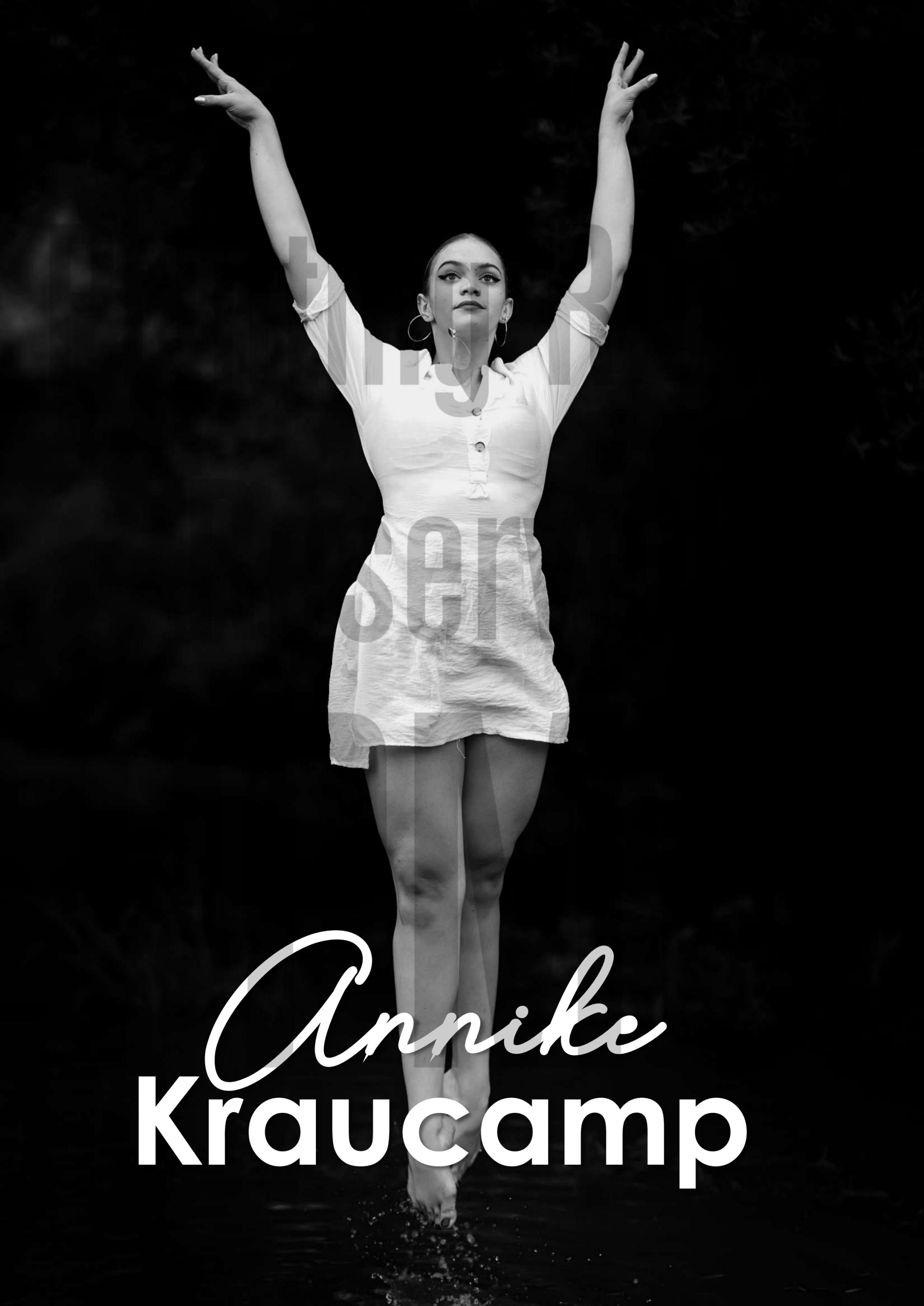
Beyond job placements, The Chair plays a crucial role in tackling South Africa’s unemployment crisis. “We are raising awareness and educating job seekers on how to improve their employability,” she says. “By providing insights into the recruitment process, we empower people to navigate the job market more effectively.”

Her advice to those struggling to find work is simple. “Stay determined and proactive. Take every opportunity to learn, whether through upskilling, networking, or mentorship. Each setback is a stepping stone toward success. Keep pushing forward and seek support when needed.”

Working alongside host Kgaugelo KC Mokholwane has been a highlight of her experience. “KC’s energy and charisma resonate with viewers, while my HR expertise adds depth to the discussions. Together, we create a dynamic and engaging atmosphere that helps job seekers.” Her HR experience has shaped how she mentors candidates. “I understand the challenges job seekers face, and that allows me to provide tailored guidance. My goal is to help them not just secure a job but build a successful career.”

She hopes that this season of The Chair leaves viewers feeling inspired. “I want people to believe that they can overcome challenges and achieve their dreams. This show is about more than just job placements—it’s about community, opportunity, and the power of never giving up. Together, we can create a brighter future for South Africa.”





Annika
Kraucamp

Interview with Annike Kraucamp

Dancing from the Heart



For Annike, dance has been a part of her life for as long as she can remember. It all started when she was just seven years old, dancing and singing at children's church. "I randomly started to dance and sing, and I guess it stuck," she says. Since then, dance has become a major part of her life, a place where she can let go and let the music take control. "There's no better feeling than standing on stage, everyone watching you, and dancing your heart out."

One of her most memorable experiences was competing at SACOPA. "After months of training together and trusting each other, standing on stage with my team and placing first in almost every dance was an incredible moment. We were so proud of ourselves, our fellow dancers, and our teacher, Marelie Stevens. Most of all, we were thankful to God for our talents and the opportunity to share them on such a big stage." Unfortunately, despite qualifying to represent South Africa, the cost of international competitions made it impossible for them to go.

While still in Grade 11, Annike assists her dance teacher, working with young dancers. "It's not easy balancing school, my own dance classes, teaching, and my personal life, but in the end, it's worth it. Seeing the children grow and develop their talent, even at a young age, makes it all worthwhile. Learning time management now will only help me become more efficient as an adult."

Teaching has been a rewarding experience for her. "It's a great honor and privilege to help teach young dancers. I can see in them what my teacher saw in me 11 years ago. Standing in front of the class next to the woman who has inspired so much of my dance journey is an incredible feeling. Dance is more than a sport—we get to show them that."

Annike has mastered multiple dance styles, from Modern, Tap, and Jazz to Ballet, Musical Theatre, Hip-Hop, and Acrobatics. "Modern is my favorite style. It's all about precision. You have to feel the music and let your body tell the story." Balancing school, dance, and other interests like singing, drawing, and

makeup requires discipline. "With my mother's help, I learned to prioritize. School and dance come first. I make sure I complete my schoolwork, put in the hours for dance, and still enjoy it. Singing is something I do all the time—during school, while cleaning, dancing, in church, and even in the shower. Drawing is part of my schoolwork since I take visual art as a subject. Makeup is fun for photoshoots, everyday looks, and, of course, stage performances. I love them all."

Despite being selected to represent South Africa at multiple competitions, including SACOPA, Dance Star, Dance for Africa, and the World Dance Challenge, she was never able to attend due to financial constraints and, in one case, COVID restrictions. "Even though I didn't get to go, just being chosen was an honor. It was proof that our hard work paid off and that our teacher was proud of us."

Her dream is to become both a dancer and a foundation phase teacher. "I want to teach children at school and in dance classes what dance can do for them. Dance is not just a sport—it's a lifestyle. It builds character and gives people a way to express their feelings. My passion is children, and if I can teach them what I've learned, I'll be happy, no matter where I teach."

If she could introduce dance as a sport in schools, she would encourage students by showing them how dance allows them to express their emotions. "Even the shyest person can step on stage and be free for those three minutes. Dance is more than movement—it's about trust, friendships, and being part of a family. I am grateful for my friends, my family, and my dance family."

Preparing for competitions takes both physical and mental effort. "Physically, it's easy—you just have to practice until it's perfect," she says with a laugh. "It takes hours, days, weeks, months. Sweat, tears, laughter, fun, and a lot of repetition. Your body has to become one with the music. The hardest part is mentally preparing to step on stage, but once the music starts and my body moves, I block out the crowd and just dance. That moment when you finish,

tired but hearing the cheers and seeing your coach in the wings—it's the best feeling." Music plays a huge role in her dance journey. "You need to feel the music and tell the story with your body. In Musical Theatre, you become the character, singing, acting, and dancing all at once. Music brings the dance to life."

On and off stage, Annike's personality shines. "I'm free-spirited and outgoing. On stage, I can be soft and emotional in lyrical dance or strong and fierce in hip-hop. Dance is like changing outfits—you have to adapt to the story you're telling. But overall, I love to laugh and make people laugh. My personality is always positive and cheerful."

Her advice to young dancers is simple: "Do it. It's worth it. The pain, effort, time, and energy—it's all worth it. Even if it gets difficult and you feel like quitting, don't. You're closer than you think to discovering what you're capable of. Believe in yourself, and you'll be amazed by what you can achieve."

When asked what makes her happiest—being on stage, teaching young dancers, or dancing freely in the rain—she smiles. "Dancing in the rain, feeling free, is amazing. But stepping onto that stage, knowing the hours of work that went into the performance and showing the audience what I can do—it's just another kind of amazing."



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Bonica

**From Shy Beginnings to
the International Stage**

You can find her on Facebook: Bonica
Beyonce Eloff, Instagram: @boni_ca281,
and TikTok: @bonica35, where she
shares her experiences, inspirations,
and milestones.

Meet Bonica Beyonce Eloff

Journey to the International Stage



Bonica Beyonce Eloff found her passion for modeling at a young age. She describes herself as a shy girl who discovered confidence and comfort on stage. "Being on stage just felt like home, my happy place. It's the one place where I feel like myself," she says.

Her journey in the industry began with pageants, but over the past five years, she has taken modeling more seriously. "I realized that modeling is my true passion. Although I am grateful for the great pageants I've participated in, I want to do this professionally," Bonica shares.

Her hard work and dedication have led to an incredible opportunity—an international journey with Project AIM from Figures. "My modeling teacher told me that I have what they are looking for, and for the last couple of months, all the models from Figures have worked hard to make sure we are ready."

Representing South Africa on an international platform is an honor that fills her with pride. "I am so excited and proud at the same time. I believe that South Africa has the most wonderful and amazing people, and I hope to make everyone proud," she says. The most exciting part of her modeling journey so far has been meeting new people, forming friendships, and showcasing her talents.

At just 17 years old, Bonica has faced challenges balancing school and modeling. "It was hard in the beginning, but time management is the best thing for me. I have OCD, and I face a lot of challenges in life, but nothing will keep me from following my dreams," she reveals.

She also opens up about her personal struggles, sharing, "I am diabetic and on the autism spectrum. At first, I was afraid to say anything because of what people might think, but now I say it out loud."

I am proud of how far I have come and how I have overcome the things I once thought would hold me back." With the support of her parents, she faces each challenge one step at a time.

Her motivation comes from pushing herself beyond limits. "One step at a time, I push myself to do the impossible," she says. Her ultimate vision is to become the best model she can be and eventually launch her own fashion line.

To stay grounded in an industry focused on appearance, she credits her mother. "I have the best mom in the world. She tells me that beauty comes from within, and if you are beautiful inside, your beauty will shine on the outside."

Bonica finds inspiration in many different models, but she especially admires Kiara Arends, a local model from Figures. She remains committed to growth, attending modeling classes three times a week and working hard every day. She and her mother are also preparing to open their own Figures branch, where she can practice daily and teach new models. "I want to help others reach their dreams," she says.

For young aspiring models, Bonica has a simple yet powerful message: "Listen to your heart, dream big, and don't let anyone tell you that you can't. Believe in yourself." She handles the pressures of being in the spotlight by reminding herself, "Only I can allow things to make or break me."

Beyond modeling, Bonica has a passion for fashion design, reading books, and helping others. As she prepares for her international journey, she remains focused on her dreams, determined to make her mark in the industry while inspiring others to do the same.

"I believe that South Africa has the most wonderful and amazing people and hope to make everyone proud."





Khumo Maluleke

PPMC MAGAZINE ISSUE 141

How 15-Year-Old Khumo Maluleke is Carving Her Path in the Modeling Industry with Confidence, Creativity, and Big Dreams



Photo credit: Sielsgeluk Photography
MUA: Hannah Makeup Artist
Styling: b-U Models South Africa
Venue: Warmbaths Airfield

At just 15 years old, Khumo Maluleke is already making her mark in the modeling industry. With a passion that started as an interest and turned into a serious pursuit, she is proving that dreams can become reality with the right mindset and determination.

"It has always been something I wanted to do. I just got the courage to take it seriously and actually go for it!" she says. That decision led her to an unforgettable first photoshoot, which she describes as an incredible experience. "It was an airway theme. I learned so much more about modeling and what it was actually about. Everyone was so kind and patient since it was my first time."

Despite being new to the industry, Khumo has already picked up valuable lessons.

"If you can believe in something, you have the ability to make it happen. My mother always says this to me, and it's the best advice I've received."

Khumo enjoys the creative side of modeling, especially dressing up for different shoots and themes. But like any journey, there have been challenges too. "Wearing heels for the first time in class was definitely tough, but no challenge is ever too big to conquer!"

She dreams of one day walking in a Paris fashion show, a goal that keeps her motivated. "I always dream about it every time I model. The idea of walking the runway in Paris is something I constantly visualize. The energy, the audience, the lights—it's something I truly want to experience."

But for now, her days are filled with school, modeling, and balancing her busy schedule. "Every day is just busy because I'm a high school student. So, when I do get the chance, I sleep or relax just to recharge." She believes that rest is just as important as working hard, allowing her to reset and stay focused on her goals.

There are many sides to Khumo that people may not know. "I am a good singer, I love researching and studying ancient history, and I am a painter. I also did ballet when I was younger, and I am very interested in learning about all types of disabilities because my little brother has cerebral palsy." She has a deep connection to understanding different disabilities and is passionate about inclusivity and awareness.

Fitness is also a big part of her life, but she prefers something fun over a strict workout routine. "I do hip-hop dancing as a form of fitness, and it's so much fun when we go for competitions. It keeps me active and allows me to express myself through movement." Dancing is not only her form of exercise but also something that brings her joy and confidence.

When it comes to beauty, she sticks to a skincare routine that helps her maintain a healthy glow. "Every morning, I wash my face with an acne-prone face wash and let my face air dry. Then I apply a vitamin C serum, followed by lotion from the same brand as my face wash, and finally sunscreen. Water is important, so I drink lots of it throughout the day." She believes that taking care of her skin is a priority and ensures she follows this routine daily. Her taste in music is just as

diverse as her interests. "I listen to neo-soul and hip-hop. Both genres are worlds apart, but they balance me out." Music plays a significant role in her daily life, whether it's to relax or get into the right mindset for a shoot.

When it comes to fashion, her personal style is a mix of moods and influences. "It really depends on how I'm feeling—sometimes more girly, sometimes more tomboy. But I do lean more towards 90s fashion most of the time. I love baggy jeans, crop tops, oversized jackets, and sneakers. The 90s era had such a cool and effortless style, and I feel like it really represents my personality."

As for what makes her happiest? "Food makes me happy the most! There's nothing better than sitting down and enjoying a good meal."

If she wasn't modeling, Khumo would still be expressing herself in other ways. "I am already a dancer, but I would be a swimmer because I'm really interested in swimming. I think water has a way of making people feel free and at peace."

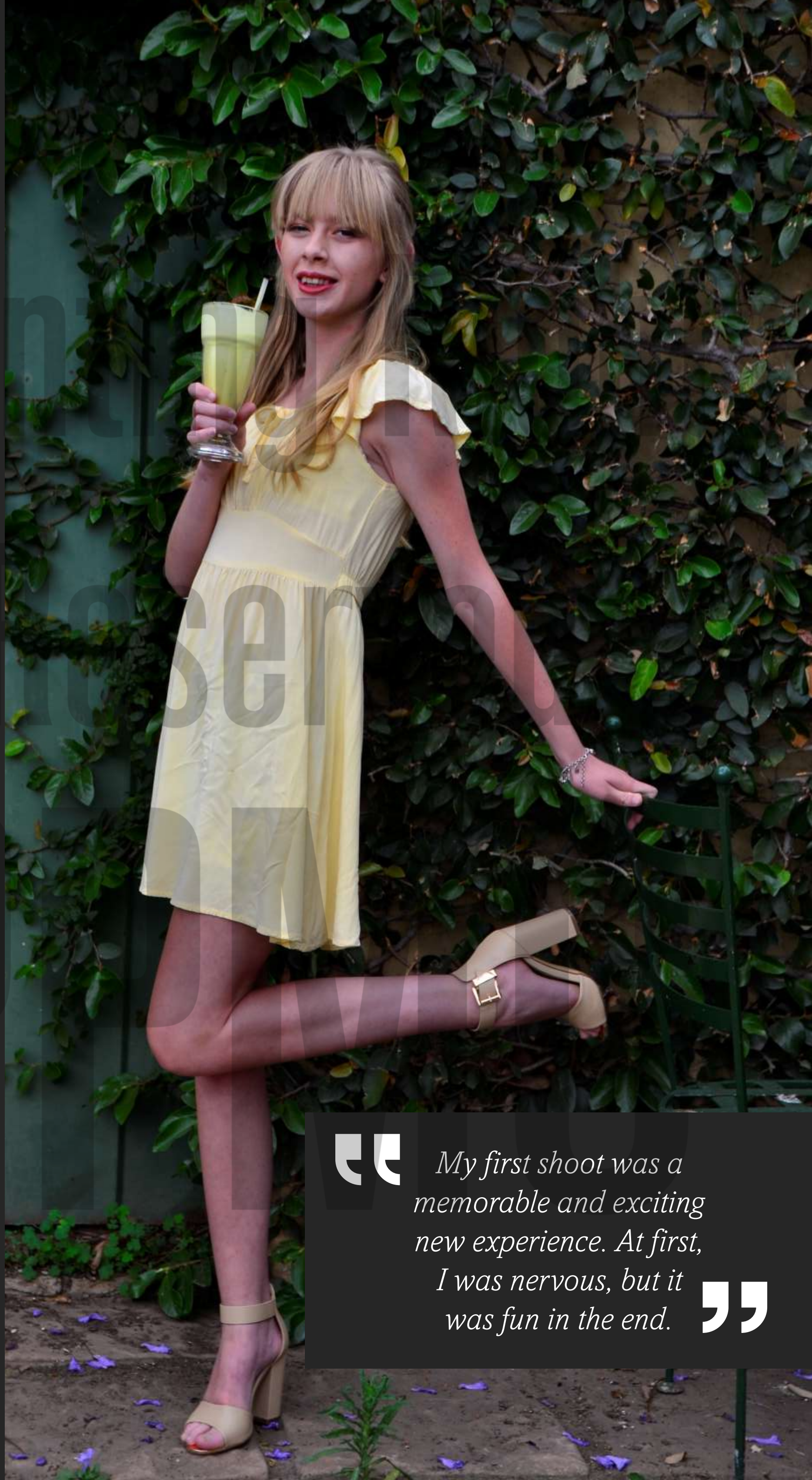
Looking ahead, Khumo has clear goals for her future. "I want to move to Cape Town and study at the University of Cape Town—it has always been my dream. And of course, my biggest goal is for my modeling journey to take off someday. I want to work with big brands, walk international runways, and inspire other young girls to follow their dreams."

Khumo believes that modeling is more than just posing in front of the camera. "It's about confidence, expression, and telling a story through your presence. Every shoot is different, and I love the challenge of bringing something new to each one." With her talent, determination, and passion, there's no doubt that Khumo Maluleke is on her way to making her dreams come true. The world of fashion better watch out—this young star is just getting started.

**Photo credit: Sielsgeluk Photography
MUA: Hannah Makeup Artist & Nail Technician**

Chasing Dreams in the Modeling World

Amore van der Merwe



“

My first shoot was a memorable and exciting new experience. At first, I was nervous, but it was fun in the end.

”



Photo credit: Sielsgeluk Photography
MUA: Hannah Makeup Artist
Styling: b-U Models South Africa
Venue: Warmbaths Airfield

Amore van der Merwe always knew she wanted to be a model. At just 18 years old, she has already gained experience in the industry and continues to build her career. "Modeling was something I always wanted to do," she says. She took her first steps into the world of fashion and photography by joining B-U Models SA, a school dedicated to helping aspiring models reach their potential. From the start, she knew this was the right path for her.

Looking back on her first photo shoot, Amore recalls it as an unforgettable experience. "My first shoot was a memorable and exciting new experience. At first, I was nervous, but it was fun in the end," she shares. The nerves quickly faded as she embraced the excitement of being in front of the camera. Over time, she has grown more comfortable in front of the lens, embracing every challenge as an opportunity to learn and improve. "See every challenge as an opportunity to grow is the best piece of advice I've gotten," she adds. This mindset has helped her stay motivated and push through difficult moments in her career.

Among the many projects she has worked on, one stands out as a favorite. "For me, the project I enjoyed working on the most was 'Kampvuur Fees' because all of my close friends were there to support me," she says. The event was a special moment for her, as it

combined her love for modeling with the presence of those who mean the most to her. While some projects have been rewarding, others have pushed her limits. "My most challenging project was advertising 'Landcruiser Dust' in high heels the entire day," she admits, proving that modeling is not always as glamorous as it seems. It was a physically demanding job, but she powered through it, determined to do her best.

When asked about her dream modeling job, Amore remains open to new possibilities. "I would really like to do more modeling for different companies, but I don't have a specific one in mind," she says. She enjoys exploring different opportunities and is eager to see where her career takes her next. Her dedication and willingness to take on new challenges make her a versatile and promising model.

A typical day in Amore's life is packed with activities. "My typical day is going to school, practicing athletics, doing my homework, and then going to bed," she explains. Balancing school and modeling requires discipline and time management, but she handles it with ease. When she has free time, she enjoys expressing her creativity. "If I had time off, I would do some drawings or art," she says. Art has always been a passion of hers, and she finds it to be a great way to relax and unwind.

There are a few things people might not know about Amore. "I am very outgoing. I've lost my pet snake. I love the ocean and all the animals in it. I love maths. I am a kind and loving person," she reveals. These facts give a glimpse into her personality beyond modeling. She has a deep appreciation for nature and animals, which is why the ocean holds a special place in her heart. Losing her pet snake was a tough moment for her, but she cherishes the memories she had with it.

Fitness is often a key part of a model's lifestyle, but for Amore, it's more about enjoyment than obligation. "I only do fitness routines for fun," she says. She believes that staying active should be something people enjoy rather than something they feel forced to do. When it comes to beauty, she keeps it simple. "I don't have a specific beauty routine, but I wash my face every night and use a toner in the mornings," she shares. She believes that natural beauty comes from taking care of oneself and staying true to who you are.

Music is another passion of hers, and she has an open-minded approach to different genres. "I really like all kinds of music and listen to any kind of music," she says. Whether it's pop, classical, or rock, she enjoys it all. Her personal style is just as relaxed. "My personal style is casual wear," she says, preferring comfort over trends. She believes that fashion is about expressing yourself and feeling good in what you wear.

Happiness for Amore comes from the simple joys in life. "Things that make me happy are animals, chocolate, my friends and family, food, and drawing," she says with a smile. She values the little moments that bring joy and tries to surround herself with positivity. Looking ahead, she has clear aspirations. "In my future, I want to become a hairstylist and a model," she states. Her passion for hairstyling is just as strong as her love for modeling, and she dreams of combining the two in a successful career.

With her passion for modeling, a positive mindset, and a love for creativity, Amore van der Merwe is set to make her mark in both the fashion and beauty industries. Her journey is just beginning, and she is ready to take on whatever comes next. With her determination and love for what she does, there is no doubt that she will achieve great things in the future.



Betty
Ngonhamo



Growing up, Betty Ngonhamo was always fascinated by the world of pageantry and the impact it could have on people's lives. At 19, she decided to take a chance and enter her first local pageant. That moment marked the beginning of a journey filled with dedication, self-motivation, and hard work. "As a pageant model, I've learned to be self-motivated and driven, relying on my own passion and determination," she says.

Now a finalist for Miss Grand South Africa 2025, Betty is embracing the opportunities and challenges that come with the competition. "This experience has allowed me to showcase my passion for youth empowerment while inspiring young people to pursue their dreams," she shares. "I'm excited to see where this journey takes me because I am ready to live my grandest dreams."

Betty is not only a model but also a qualified educator, and she believes these two roles complement each other perfectly. "As an educator, I've developed strong communication and interpersonal skills, which are significant in the modeling industry. Teaching has taught me adaptability, creativity, and patience—all essential skills for a model." She also credits modeling with helping her become a more confident and engaging teacher. "Working with people from different backgrounds has made me more empathetic and inclusive. The confidence I've gained through modeling has helped me be a better educator."

Youth empowerment is a cause close to Betty's heart. "The youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow. I was lucky to have mentors who believed in me, but I also saw many of my peers struggle with self-doubt and lack of opportunities," she reflects. Through her work, she has witnessed the transformative power of empowerment. "It gives young people confidence, self-assurance, and the

determination to succeed. By empowering them, we can help them overcome barriers and create a brighter future."

One of her most memorable experiences as a youth advocate was judging a school pageant. "Watching students confidently take the stage reminded me of the importance of empowering young minds. Seeing their excitement and enthusiasm was inspiring, and it reinforced my desire to make a positive impact on others' lives. Even small acts of encouragement can make a huge difference."

Betty strongly believes in education as a tool for change. "Education is the key to creating lasting change, and that belief fuels my passion for uplifting the youth. If I were crowned Miss Grand South Africa, my mission would be to foster a love for learning, promote critical thinking, and provide resources to help young people overcome challenges and thrive. Addressing systemic obstacles can help break cycles of poverty and build a better future for South Africa."

Being a finalist in Miss Grand South Africa has given Betty a platform to share her story and inspire others. "This competition amplifies voices that often go unheard. It's rewarding to know that I have a chance to lead with impact and connect with like-minded women who share my passion for making a difference."

Preparing for the finale requires focus and discipline. "I've been refining my skills, building my confidence, and visualizing success. I stay focused and positive by working on my mental preparation, practicing positive affirmations, and prioritizing self-care. I also stay physically fit and rehearse my walk for the finale. By combining these elements, I feel confident and ready to give it my all."

Balancing pageantry, career, and advocacy takes discipline and time management. "I make sure to stay focused on my goals and surround myself with supportive people who encourage me," she says. To young people who see her as a role model, she has a clear message: "You have the

power to create the life you want. Believe in yourself, work hard, and never give up. Accept that not everything goes according to plan, and be prepared for setbacks. Learn from your mistakes because dreams delayed are not dreams denied."

If she wins Miss Grand South Africa, Betty plans to use her platform to amplify young voices and advocate for policies that promote youth empowerment. "I want to work with organizations and stakeholders to support education, economic empowerment, and youth development. With the Miss Grand International #StopTheWarAndViolence campaign, I stand firm in spreading love, peace, and reconciliation."

Betty credits her mentor, family, and friends as her biggest supporters. "Their unwavering belief in me has been a constant source of inspiration and motivation. They've taught me the importance of hard work and dedication. Their love and support have given me the confidence to take risks and pursue my goals."

The journey hasn't been without challenges. "One of the biggest struggles has been balancing pageantry with work and personal life. Prioritizing tasks, setting boundaries, and learning to say no have helped me manage my time effectively. I've also faced criticism and negativity, but I've developed a thick skin and learned to focus on constructive feedback. My worth is not defined by the opinions of others. Taking care of my mental, physical, and emotional well-being has been crucial in managing pressure and stress."

To anyone considering entering pageants or pursuing their dreams, Betty offers simple but powerful advice: "Believe in yourself and trust your abilities. Know why you want to take on this challenge. Be prepared for setbacks but maintain a growth mindset. Surround yourself with positivity and supportive people. Take care of yourself and stay true to who you are. Most importantly, take the leap—you never know what incredible opportunities await you."

From Dreamer to Runway Star

Carla Pirker

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I'm most excited about working with talented industry professionals, expanding my network.

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Interview with Carla Dirker

Excelling at V-Models South Africa



Carla Dirker's modeling journey began with a dream and a deep admiration for the confidence and grace that the industry represents. "I've always been drawn to the confidence and grace that modeling represents," she says. What started as a passion soon turned into a rewarding career as she gained experience through competitions, training sessions, and photoshoots. Over the past two and a half years, she has grown tremendously, not only in skill but also in self-assurance.

Being crowned Miss Senior 2024 and winning Miss Photogenic at V-Models has been a major highlight in Carla's career. "It feels absolutely surreal! These titles mean more than just crowns and sashes—they represent growth and the incredible support system around me." She was also Miss Junior 2023, an experience that helped shape her into the confident model she is today. "That year taught me how to present myself authentically, which helped me transition into the senior category with more poise and experience."

Among the many unforgettable moments in her career, stepping onto the runway for the first time at a major fashion event stands out. "The adrenaline, the bright lights, and the energy of the audience made it unforgettable," she recalls. Another defining moment was hearing her name announced as Miss Senior 2024, a milestone that filled her with pride.

Carla's journey continues as she prepares for Opulants' Fresh Face 2025. "I'm most excited about working with talented industry professionals,

expanding my network, and pushing myself creatively," she shares. She sees it as a chance to refine her skills and take her career to the next level.

Preparation for competitions and pageants involves both mental and physical discipline. "Physically, I stay active with regular workouts and maintain a healthy diet. Mentally, I practice confidence-building techniques like positive affirmations and visualization. I also spend time perfecting my walk, poses, and interview skills."

Her experience at V-Models has taught her a valuable lesson: confidence is everything. "The way you carry yourself matters just as much as your looks. I've also learned that rejection is part of the journey—it only makes you stronger and more determined to succeed."

Being in front of the camera is one of Carla's favorite aspects of modeling. "I love the ability to express different emotions and tell a story through a single shot. Whether it's a fierce look or a soft smile, I make sure my expressions are genuine and engaging."

Despite her success, the journey has not been without challenges. "One of the biggest challenges has been self-doubt. It's easy to compare yourself to others, but I've learned to focus on my unique qualities." Surrounding herself with supportive people and celebrating small wins has helped her stay motivated.

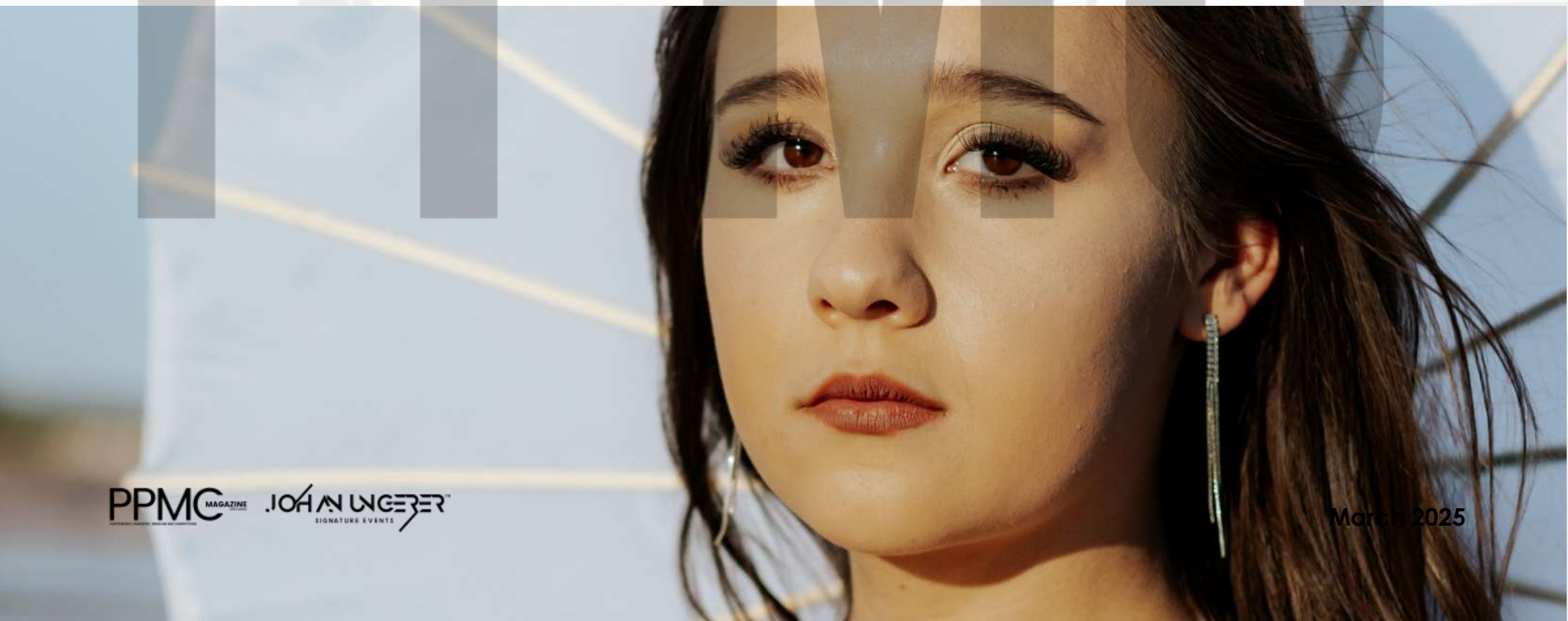
Balancing school with modeling requires careful planning. "Time management is key! I keep a structured schedule and

prioritize my schoolwork while dedicating specific times to modeling." Her advice to others in a similar situation is to stay organized, communicate with teachers, and never neglect their education.

Carla looks up to models like Tyra Banks and Naomi Campbell. "They broke barriers and showed that modeling is about personality and hard work. Their stories inspire me to keep pushing forward." In the next year, she hopes to land more high-fashion campaigns, participate in international competitions, and continue building her brand. "I also want to inspire other young models to believe in themselves and pursue their dreams fearlessly."

For aspiring models, her advice is simple: "Start by building confidence and learning the basics. Take professional photos, practice your walk and poses, and research modeling agencies. Most importantly, believe in yourself—everyone starts somewhere, and consistency is what makes the difference."

Carla also hopes to use her platform to advocate for self-love and body positivity. "The modeling industry is evolving, but there's still pressure to fit certain standards. I want to encourage people to embrace their uniqueness and know that beauty comes in all shapes, sizes, and colors." With a bright future ahead, Carla Dirker continues to push boundaries and inspire those around her. Her journey is just beginning, and the world can expect to see much more from this talented young model.





Zilieke Hayward

PPMC MAGAZINE ISSUE 141

How Zilieke Hayward's Passion for Rescue Animals, Photography,
and Faith Shapes Her Journey of Healing and Purpose

Interview with Zilieke Hayward

Finding Strength in Trust



When Zilieke Hayward moved to Deben three years ago, she didn't expect to find her passion in a rescued horse. The animal had been abused, left scared and unwilling to trust anyone. But something in Zilieke made her determined to change that.

"It took me three months to gain his trust and climb on his back," she recalls. "From that moment, I told myself I wanted to break in horses."

That experience ignited her love for working with rescue animals. For Zilieke, helping these animals isn't just about giving them a second chance—it's about being their voice. "I always tell people, an animal can't speak for itself—that's why we are here for them," she explains.

There are difficult moments, like the time she tried to save a baby donkey in February 2025. The newborn was abandoned by its mother and was too weak to survive. "We cleaned him and tried to keep him alive, but the next morning, the vet told us there was nothing they could do. It broke my heart, but I realized that you must have a passion for this work, and sometimes, you also have to let go."

Despite these challenges, Zilieke finds comfort in nature and photography, especially when she's with her mother. "It's just me and the woman I love, the woman who teaches me what's right and wrong. My mother is my safe place."

Photography has become more than a hobby—it's a way for Zilieke to see herself differently. "I'm still young, but I've had a lot of pain and rejection in my life. Nature can't reject me. When I see myself through the camera lens, I realize that no matter what I've been through, I am beautiful inside and out. No one will break me."

Her faith plays a huge role in how she approaches life. "When I gave my heart to God, I learned not to judge people when they are at their lowest. Instead, we should help and support them. Love others for who they are, and they will love you for who you are." Trust hasn't always been easy, but Zilieke has learned that honesty and openness make a difference. "Being upfront about my thoughts, feelings, and intentions, and listening to others—that's how I build trust."

Each rescue animal teaches her something new, and every experience strengthens her passion. "Every animal has its own personality, its own story. Some need patience, some need more love. But seeing them heal and trust again makes everything worth it."

Balancing her passion for animals, photography, and school requires discipline. "Most of my hobbies I do on weekends. During the week, I focus more on my schoolwork."

For young people struggling with trust and understanding others, Zilieke has simple advice: "Get to know people before judging them. What others say about someone isn't always the truth. It's hard to trust, but once trust is there, you can climb mountains together."

Looking ahead, her dream is clear: "My goal is to finish school and follow my dreams. If they are meant to be, everything will work out for me."

Zilieke Hayward's journey is about more than rescuing animals—it's about finding trust, learning to let go, and believing in herself. With her passion and determination, there's no doubt she will continue making a difference. Her story is still being written, but one thing is certain: she will always fight for those who cannot fight for themselves.





Letlhagorola Mogamotsi

PPMC MAGAZINE ISSUE 141

A Model with a Mission—Empowering Women, Championing Sustainability, and Paving the Way for a Better Future

Meet Letlhogonolo Mogomotsi

A Model with a Mission

Letlhogonolo Mogomotsi is not just a model—she is a woman on a mission. At 23 years old, she has dedicated herself to women's empowerment and environmental sustainability, two causes that define her purpose. Born in Hebron and raised in Ga-Rankuwa, Letlhogonolo's journey has been shaped by the values of hard work, perseverance, and community spirit.

Her love for modeling and pageantry began at a young age, but it was in 2019 that she took the leap into the industry. "What drew me to pageantry was the opportunity to showcase not only my physical beauty but also my intellect, personality, and values," she explains. Since then, she has used her platform to inspire young girls, encouraging them to dream big and believe in themselves. As a finalist in prestigious competitions such as Miss Glam South Africa 2024, she continues to prove that pageantry is about more than just looks—it's about making a difference.

Letlhogonolo's passion for environmental sustainability has played a huge role in shaping her career goals. Currently studying Life and Environmental Science, she plans to become an Environmental Health and Safety Practitioner. "As someone passionate about environmental conservation, I believe it's our responsibility to protect the environment and ensure our communities are safe and healthy," she says. Her studies and advocacy work go hand in hand, as she strives to promote sustainability in both her personal and professional life.

For Letlhogonolo, women's empowerment and environmental sustainability are deeply connected. "Empowering women is essential to achieving environmental sustainability," she emphasizes. She points out that women, often primary caregivers and managers of natural resources, play a crucial role in conservation efforts.

She actively supports organizations that uplift women and promote environmental awareness, integrating her passions into her daily life. From reducing single-use plastics to using public transport, she makes conscious choices that align with her values.

Balancing her studies, modeling career, and advocacy work is no easy task, but Letlhogonolo remains focused. "I prioritize tasks, set realistic goals, and take breaks when needed," she shares. Having a strong support system also keeps her motivated. "Surrounding myself with people who share my values helps me stay inspired."

Through her platform, she hopes to address critical issues such as access to education, economic empowerment, and reproductive health. "These are key areas in women's empowerment, and I want to use my voice to raise awareness and inspire young girls to pursue their dreams," she says. Growing up in Ga-Rankuwa, she learned the importance of giving back to her community. "My community means everything to me. It has shaped who I am, and I feel a responsibility to uplift those around me."

When it comes to sustainability, Letlhogonolo believes that even small changes can make a significant impact. "Reducing single-use plastics, conserving water, and using public transport are simple steps that can lead to real change," she explains. She envisions herself working with organizations to develop sustainable practices and promote environmental conservation. "As an Environmental Health and Safety Practitioner, I want to integrate my passion for the environment and health into my work."

One of the most fulfilling aspects of her journey has been inspiring young girls in her community. "Knowing that I'm making a positive impact is the greatest reward," she says. However, the path has not always been easy. "The modeling industry can be challenging, but I've learned to stay true to myself and my values. That has been my biggest lesson."

Looking ahead, Letlhogonolo sees herself thriving in both her environmental career and modeling journey. "In five years, I want to be working with organizations to promote sustainability while continuing to use my platform to advocate for women's empowerment and environmental conservation," she shares. She hopes to collaborate with brands that align with

her values, ensuring that her work creates lasting change. Her passion for climate change, waste management, and conservation remains strong. "Women play a crucial role in environmental conservation, and we need to support and empower them," she says. By highlighting the connection between women's empowerment and sustainability, she hopes to encourage more people to take action.

Letlhogonolo's journey is proof that modeling can be a powerful tool for advocacy. "I want to inspire others to pursue careers in both modeling and environmental conservation," she says. "Together, we can make a positive impact and promote sustainable practices that benefit our communities and the environment."

With a heart for change and a vision for a better future, Letlhogonolo Mogomotsi is paving the way for a new generation of models—ones who are not only beautiful but also driven to make a difference.



Miss Teen Unique Eastern Cape 2025 Finalist

Emihle Nobungu



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*I tell myself that I can
do this and that
I have the ability
to succeed.*

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Interview with Emihle Nobungqu

Miss Teen Unique Eastern Cape 2025 Finalist

Emihle Nobungqu is embracing her role as a finalist for Miss Teen Unique Eastern Cape 2025 with pride and determination. "It really feels so good to be on this journey because it shows how unique I am and how much determination I have," she says. For Emihle, this pageant is more than just a competition—it's a chance to showcase her confidence and inspire others.

What motivated her to enter the pageant was her unwavering self-belief. "I stand tall and don't let any outcomes deter me. I don't just want to be a model; I want to be a role model for tomorrow," she explains. She hopes to use this platform to encourage other young girls to believe in themselves and pursue their dreams fearlessly.

Preparation is key for Emihle, and she takes both physical and mental readiness seriously. "Before any competition, I practice and train my mind to stay positive. I always tell myself that it seems impossible until it's done. No matter what happens, I make sure I won't be discouraged by the results."

Balancing schoolwork with her modeling commitments is another challenge she manages effectively. "I have to prioritize my schoolwork first, but I also live in the world of models. The way I balance it is by working hard on my studies so that I have quality time to practice for my modeling journey.

"I always make time for it." Emihle believes that being a great role model means leading by example. "I assist my community in different programs because I am a committed member of my community."

Her dedication to making a difference is evident in her involvement in various initiatives. One challenge she faced in her modeling journey was struggling to complete her donation drive. "I had to go into town and ask for donations. It really helped me because it showed how compassionate and curious I am."

Miss Teen Unique Eastern Cape is an opportunity for Emihle to extend her impact even further. "This platform will allow me to make a difference in my community by being a philanthropist, assisting where I can, and being a good role model."

She has already begun representing the brand by attending beauty pageants with her sash, something that fills her with pride. Handling pressure is another skill Emihle has mastered. "I tell myself that I can do this and that I have the ability to succeed, no matter what the consequences are. I also train my heart to accept disappointments." She stays motivated even during tough times by keeping her bigger goal in mind. "My dream and the role I have to play keep me going. I need to set a good example, and that's what keeps me motivated all the time."

She embraces every experience as a learning opportunity. "Even if I don't win, I remind myself that I am capable of anything. Losing is not the end of the world; instead, it helps you grow." If she wins, she hopes to use her title to inspire other young girls. "I would encourage them to do this and not let anything discourage them. I want them to believe in themselves and not let anything hold them back."

Emihle Nobungqu is a young woman with a strong vision, unwavering determination, and a heart set on making a positive impact. Her journey in Miss Teen Unique Eastern Cape is not just about winning a title—it's about proving that confidence, hard work, and self-belief can take you anywhere.



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